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THE NEW YORKER

OCT. 4, 2004

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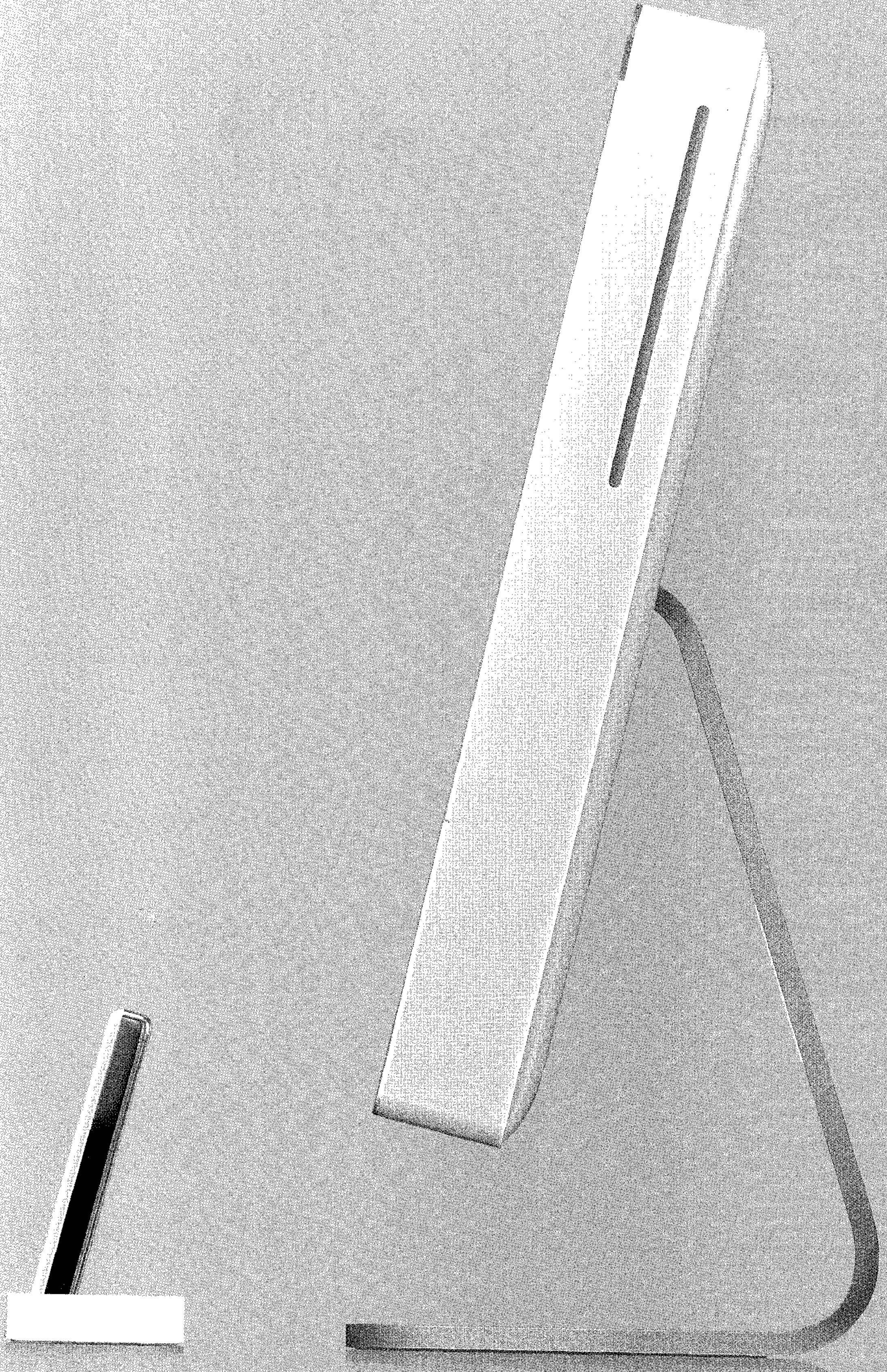

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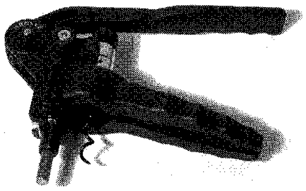

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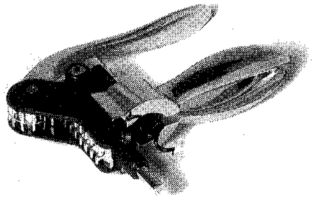

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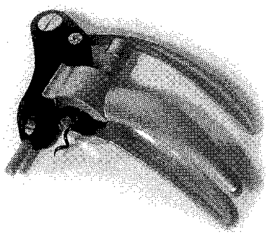

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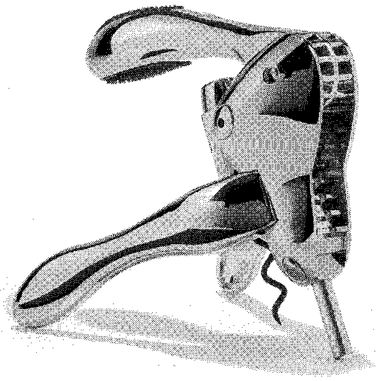

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OCTOBER 4, 2004

8 GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN
33 THE TALK OF THE TOWN
Deployment figures; dignitaries in town.

Tad Friend 42 LETTER FROM CALIFORNIA
Going Places
A mayor's ambitions for San Francisco.

Christopher Buckley 51 SHOUTS & MURMURS
Rules of Engagement

Ian Parker 52 ANNALS OF AERONAUTICS
The X Prize
The race for space tourism.

George Packer 64 A REPORTER AT LARGE
The Next Iraqi War?
Where ethnic tensions in Kirkuk may lead.

Calvin Tomkins 80 PROFILES
The Prankster
Maurizio Cattelan's subversive sculpture.
Photograph by Richard Avedon.

William Trevor 90 FICTION
"The Dressmaker's Child"

THE CRITICS

BOOKS

Ruth Franklin 100 *Norman Sherry's "The Life of Graham Greene."*
105 Briefly Noted

Sasha Frere-Jones 106 POP MUSIC
Four singles.

Nancy Franklin 108 ON TELEVISION
CBS news.

David Denby 110 THE CURRENT CINEMA
"I ♥ Huckabees," "Silver City."

POEMS

Derek Walcott 58 "A Blessing Rain"
Joseph Brodsky 78 "A Letter to General Z"

COVER *"Rubber Ducky," by Gahan Wilson* THE BACK PAGE *"Regrets Only," by Roz Chast* DRAWINGS *Lee Lorenz, Frank Cotham, Eric Lewis, David Sipress, Robert Mankoff, Matthew Diffee, P. C. Vey, Bruce Eric Kaplan, Jack Ziegler, Charles Barsotti, Leo Cullum, Barbara Smaller, J. C. Duffy, Roz Chast, Danny Shanahan, Glen Baxter, Michael Crawford, William Hamilton, Carolita Johnson, Alex Gregory, Drew Dernavich*

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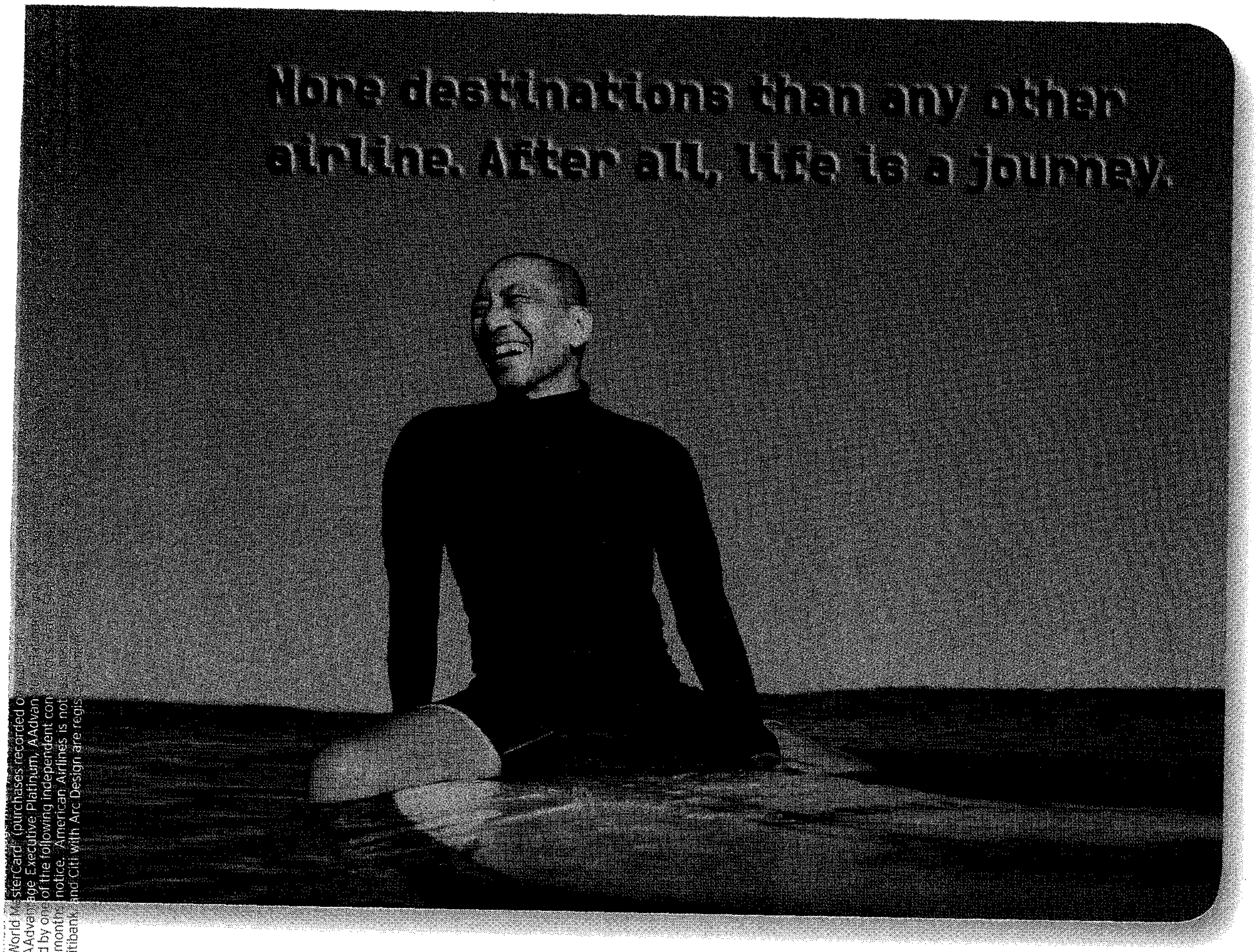
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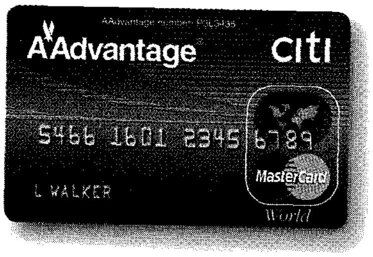

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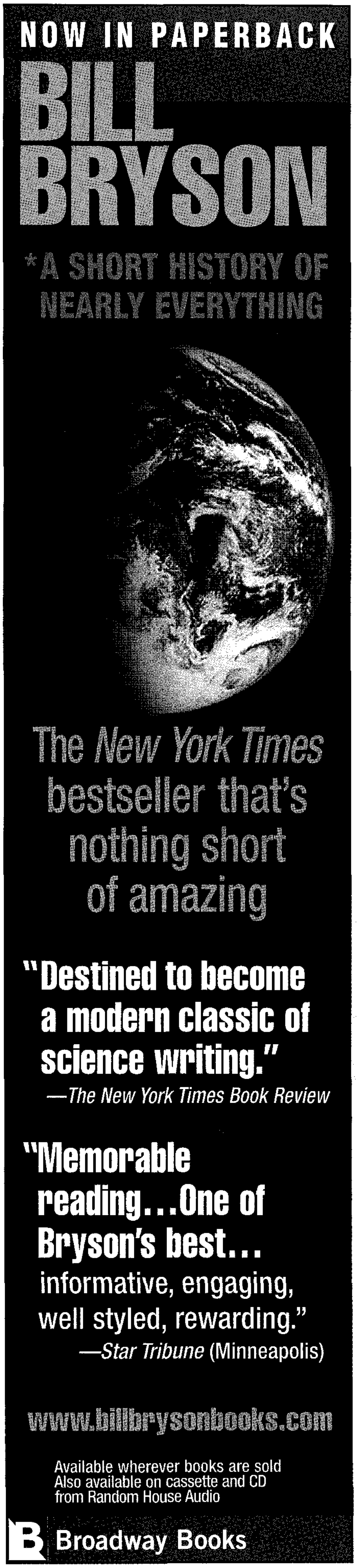

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George Packer ("The Next Iraqi War?," p. 64) is writing a book about American involvement in Iraq.

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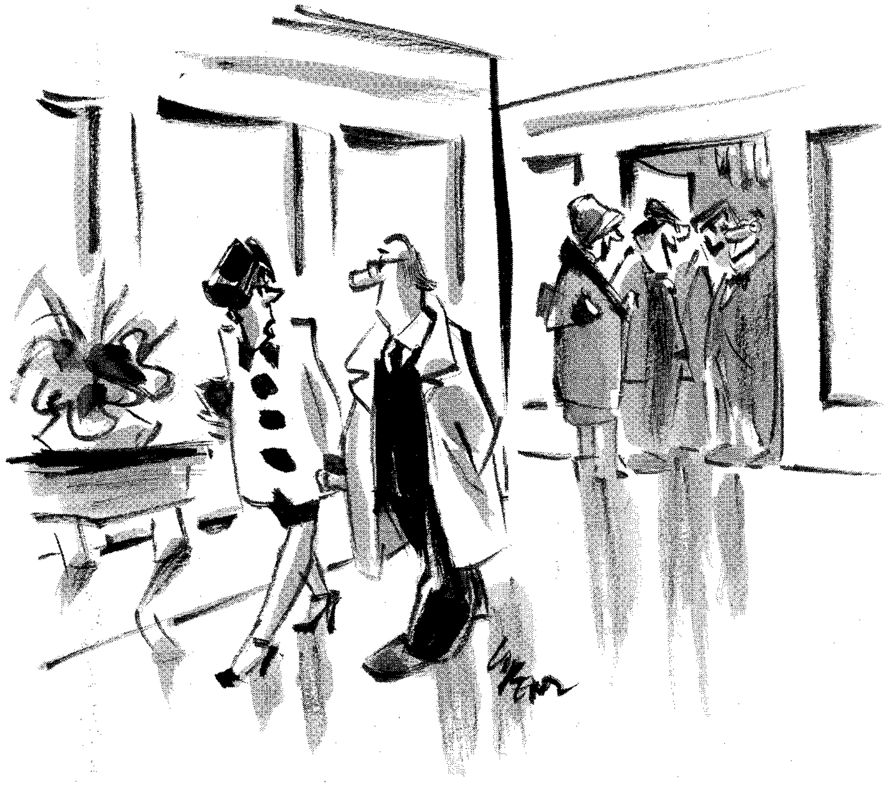
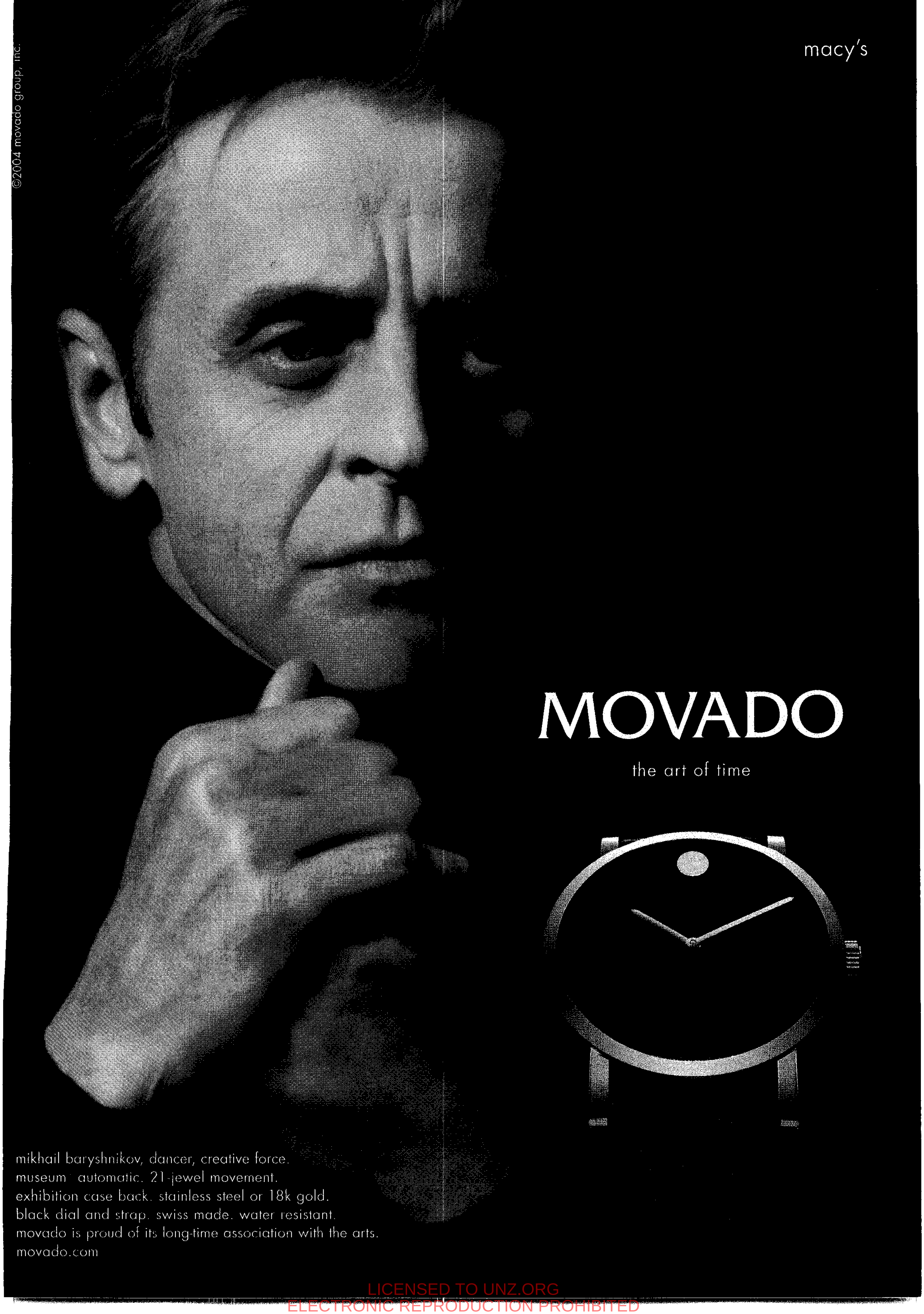
Nancy Franklin (On Television, p. 108) writes a regular column on television.

Roz Chast (Cartoon, p. 82; The Back Page, p. 112) published "The Party, After You Left," a collection of her cartoons, earlier this year. ♦



"You were the only one there who didn't know how Kerry can pull it off."



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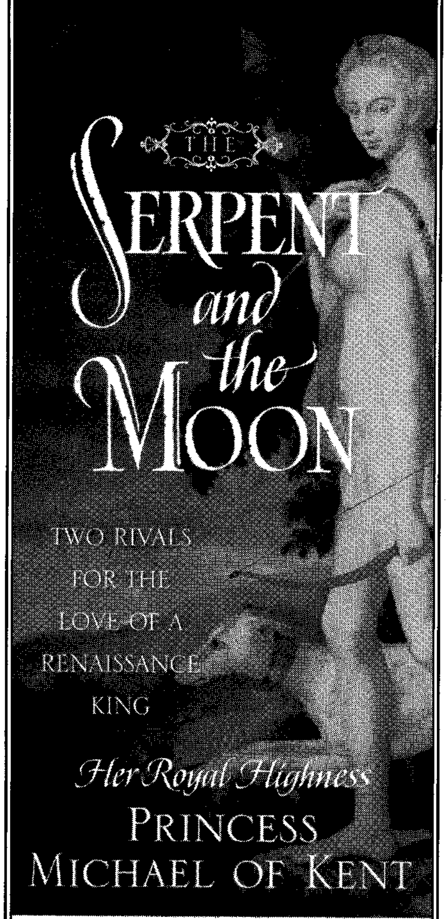

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THE CANDIDATE'S MESSAGE

Hendrik Hertzberg writes, of the commercials being run by the Swift Boat Veterans for Truth belittling Kerry's real heroism as a naval officer in the Vietnam War, that "the problem with the anti-Kerry ads is substantive, not procedural"—in other words, the problem is that they are false, not that they are paid for by a supposedly independent 527 group (Comment, September 6th). But the problem *is* procedural. There would be no ads making such claims if they had to be followed by "I'm George W. Bush and I approve this message." No candidate would dare approve it. Accountability has been legally divorced from content; that's why the content is so offensive. This is the most recent example of decades of campaign "reform" that have made things worse. That applies, of course, to both parties.

David Lebedoff
Minneapolis, Minn.

Ken Auletta's article on Robert Shrum, the senior adviser for Kerry's campaign, exposed what was becoming obvious to anyone with even a modicum of insight into advertising: Kerry's ads by committee were simply not working ("Kerry's Brain," September 20th). By attempting to offend no one, the ads reinforced Karl Rove's characterizations of Kerry as indecisive and weak—because they were indecisive and weak. Bush has given the Democrats plenty of ammunition; Kerry has been handing the election to him with his unimaginative media strategy. Advertising is a creative medium; leaving advertising decisions to political hacks is a disaster of historic proportions.

William Brown
Atlanta, Ga.

POLITICAL HARDBALL

Ben McGrath's analogy between party politics and the Red Sox-Yankees rivalry passes over two themes central to both: race and class (The Talk of the Town, September 20th). Given their embarrassing record of racism—they were the last Major League team to integrate—the Sox resemble more the Dixiecrats than today's Democrats, seen by most as the Party of ethnic diversity. Both have made strides in distancing themselves from their segregationist past, although echoes of it can still be felt. (Recently, baseball's best player, Barry Bonds, said that he would never play for Boston because it was "too racist.") But, as McGrath suggests, the Sox' cry "Cowboy Up" can also be taken as a nod to George W. and the Bushes, who embody the same demographic impossibility: the "cowboy" with patrician New England roots.

Jesse Lerner-Kinglake
Bronx, N.Y.

BREAD AND WINE

St. Thomas Aquinas can help Jim Harrison make sense of his gluttony in the wake of his thirty-seven-course meal ("A Really Big Lunch," September 6th). Aquinas describes five ways the sin can be committed: by eating too soon, by eating too expensively, by eating too much, by eating too eagerly, and by eating too fastidiously. I think that Harrison managed to load at least three bases.

The Reverend Benedict Kiely
Pastor, St. John the Baptist
Enosburg Falls, Vt.

Adam Gopnik concludes his elegantly reasoned essay on wine with the fundamentalist revelation that people drink wine primarily to get drunk (A Critic at Large, September 6th). I prefer the assessment of the wine author Creighton Churchill. Wine taken at dinner, he wrote, "nourishes a brief, rosy, but harmless viewpoint." In a mature society, we drink cocktails to get drunk.

Keith Power
Healdsburg, Calif.

•

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Smoke detectors Taximeters Airport screening devices Batteries Exit signs Conveyor belts Diapers Water disinfection Laboratory planning and design High-speed serial data cable assemblies Pneumatic filters Electric valve actuators Warning lights Coffee cups Power strips Strainers Electrical raceways Integrated fire protection cabinets Static control devices PC boards Master terminal boxes Lighting controls Bus and expansion slot connectors Subsystem integration and full-system assembly Variable-flow regulator assemblies Protection against electrical supply interruption Abrasion protection products Vehicle tactical repeaters Air conditioning equipment and systems Multi-coaxial cables Nasopharyngeal sensors Wastewater treatment plant design and engineering Rotational sensors Micro K relays Industrial automation Plastic knives, forks, and spoons Fire and emergency annunciators Drawer connectors LEDs Microelectronic sub-assembly Firefighter breathing systems Ground fault detector protective relays Solenoids Heavy-duty miniature applicators Absorbents and dessicants Voice networks Sea plows for undersea excavation Insulators Medical electrode gels Welded steel tubing Micropatch antennas Filters Thermocouple cables Avionics Polyethylene stretch films Backplane connector systems **Aircraft wire and power cables** Lamps Conformal antennas Serving trays Battery chargers Drills Panel boards Audio receivers Wire basket cable trays Pressure vessel clamps Snow melting mats Matrix switchers Amplitude measurement equipment Salve Telephony analysis Automatic door controls Wall cleaners and developers Automotive micro power relays Plastic protective sheeting Patch cable Automotive mini power relays Transmission line accessories hazard detection products Building wraps Vending machine components Scales Intuitive LCD and CRT touchmonitors USB connectors Cable clamps Micropneumatic systems Cable ducting systems Sealants and gels Electrical metallic tubing set-screw connectors and couplings Insulation facers Call center monitoring services Relays with forcibly-guided contacts Spa controls Industrial control hybrids Gas masks Laser rangefinders Sodium bicarbonate based extinguishing agents Flame-retardant drapery systems Resuscitators for infants and children Digital watch parts Shade canopy accessories Barrier strips Chalkboards Therapeutic ultrasound PIN photo diode modules Medical monitoring services Check valves Resin systems Chemical oxygen generators All-in-one touch computers Chartering cable ships Elastic bandages Wireless systems Chillers Semiconductor heat sinks Digital audio services Automotive module relays Surface mounted cabinets Rotary switches Flame retardants Pressure seal closures Electric portable air compressors Circuit breakers Automotive quality inspection equipment Solid-state components Gas discharge tube replacements Components for camcorders Panel indicators Heat isolation devices Explosion-proof detectors Climate monitoring Hazardous material protective suits Solid-state subsystems Signal magnetics Passive electronics Medical oxygen delivery Grounding connectors Telescoping sign support systems Broadband driver amplifiers Champagne glasses Drinking bottles Polymeric and porcelain surge arrestors for distribution and transmission networks Automotive power relays Garment hangers Microcoaxial assemblies Snack food packaging Modem cable assemblies Industrial control switches Continuous-slot metal framing Landfill development Multi-mode radar Patch cable assemblies Shielded and coaxial cable slices Wine glasses Flame-retardant tape Range hoods Halogen-free cables for commercial and offshore applications Absorbable monofilament sutures Cable TV converters Terminals and connectors for underground networks Syringe dispensers Cordless telephone batteries Fire protection systems Tubing for outdoor furniture framing Sensor wraps Easels PIN diodes High-performance solid state relays and power controllers Wire harness tape Ceramic burners Electrical equipment for saunas Cylindrical control connectors Terminals and splices Security systems Relay sockets and accessories Arson detection Galvanized steel tubing Paperboard Counters and timers Sealed connectors Databus assemblies Television sets DC converters Subcutaneous sensors Pipe and tube products Electrical tape High pass filter inductors Pistol grip hand tool systems for IDCs Adhesive tape Segmentally welded pipe fittings USB cables Construction management Deactivators International mains adaptors Suction instruments Test equipment Steel box connectors Calibration equipment and services Plastic tumblers Cable trays Verified audio detection Thermoplastic piping systems Coaxial cable terminators Pigtail cable assemblies Waveguides Plastics engineering Institutional timekeeping Photocopiers Cabled and blind-mate power connectors High-performance connectors Safety relief valves Access floor modules Halogen-free wire Power systems Raised face flanges Connectors for high-voltage substations Flexible non-metallic conduit Reduced wall flexible metal conduit Catheters Medication nebulizers Digital metering systems Wiring harness sockets Automobile steering columns Pediatric monitoring equipment Cable design conductors Flame-retardant tubing for nuclear environments Rooftop walkways Digital products Air sampling equipment Voltage wheels Customized point-of-sale receipts Digital proofing Power tool switches Chokes Medical diagnostics Sound mixers Air traffic control equipment Digital visual interface products Vertical drain membranes and radiant barriers Cabinet power systems Wall track systems DIP switches Resistor protection Thermostats Electrical transformers High-performance RF/microwave antennas Lighting for public services Video cables Thermal circuit breakers Video endoscopy Cable assemblies Irrigation pipe Heat-tracing connectors Potassium bicarbonate-based extinguishing agents Megaphone components Calculators Institutional can liners Voltage-variable attenuators Wafer gear Varactors Coaxial cables Patient monitoring cables Drop cloths Alarms for hazardous areas Power splitters Chassis components Stormwater and wastewater studies Card readers with web-based authentication Printer cable assemblies Engineering services Amusement machine components Disposable manual resuscitators Systems for offshore oil and gas installations Patch panels Airport lighting systems Soldering equipment Long-haul [illegible] cable systems Entry modules Microsurgical needles Cryogenic valves Wiring harness design software Automotive components [illegible] assisted design services Porcelain disc insulators Flex and rigid circuits Diagnostic procedure trays Inkjet fluids Diagnostic and stress testing [illegible] plastic sheeting Rechargeable car flashlights Memory card receptacles Spirometry systems Automatic blood pressure infusors Coated and cloth-backed building and construction tapes Power magnetics Exhausters Ultraviolet disinfection systems Moisture analysis equipment Flange gaskets with bulb elastometers Exotic alloys Professional fire department hardware Custom sterilizable cable assemblies Skin effect trace systems Dental dressings and sutures Parts for lawn and garden equipment Tape measures Flame detectors Ribbon cables Carpet backing Parallel groove clamps Graphic arts tape Extended coverage fire sprinkler heads Hand pumps Climate control monitoring Satellite radio [illegible] audio systems Jacket compounds Galvanized steel armor with PVC jackets Irrigation pumps Utility cabinets Cyanoacrylate "super glue" adhesives Large-screen video projectors Eye pads Arterial extension sets Paper mill wraps Fence framework Distribution panels Continuous timers Protective breathing equipment Special purpose spiral antennas Automatic pick, place and press Power toggle switches Fiber-optic connectors Veterinary medical products Bypass valves Carbon dioxide gas transmitters Specialty chemicals Rainfall gauges Alarms for motor vehicles Water sampling and analysis Fingerprint identification Mobile security systems Cable ties Firefighting flares Multiplier diodes Fireproof cables Drum core magnetics Audio receivers Flexible exhaust connectors Isolators and circulators Magnet wire termination machines Dual hybrids Static measuring equipment Hand-held radios Cable management accessories Steam-tracing products Extrusion laminating Parking deck PVC-jacketed metal clad cable Factory automation cables Steelwork fixings Airport construction management instrument winterization Cotton balls Pipe for recreational equipment Self-adhesive cable clips Multi-pair high flexibility cables Fixed cable termination adapters Butterfly valves Portable memory Components for CD recorders and players Telemetry systems Audio production services Integrated molding/plating technology Telephone systems Safety goggles Reverse cutting sutures Decorative shields Temperature and pressure gauges Commercial-quality steel tubing Laser diodes Temperature sensors Connection droppers Dry-erase marker boards Feminine hygiene products Storage tanks Analgesics First aid kits Thermal controls Computer-assisted surgery Power modules Subminiature D connectors Front-connected sockets Digital attenuators Automated teller machine components Spring pin coax probe assemblies Control panels Wet pipe sprinkler systems Alarm verification Security keypads Pain management products Helical gears Roadway and tunnel management systems Printed circuit terminals Galvanized round signposts Rocker and paddle switches Microwave components Roof and gutter heating cables Arson detection Voice amplifiers Fall arrest systems High-voltage connectors Power entry modules Custom broadband networks Steel threadable sprinkler pipe Accounting software Ultrasound cable assemblies Protective clothing for emergency workers Flare launchers Dry pipe systems Cable tie guns Broadband amplifiers Rectangular heavy-duty connectors Discharge devices Vibration dampers Electromagnetic flow readers Laser components Advanced composites Coaxial connectors Adhesive covers Flat steel plates Elastomeric connectors Passive fiber-optic hardware Singulation systems Electrosurgical devices Coffee service kits Automotive radar sensors Electrical metallic tubing compression connectors and couplings Intercommunication devices Customized valves Dry pipe valves Flexible hoses Curing ovens Insulated ground metal clad cables Digital satellite radio antennas Perimeter door and window protection systems Anemometers Cosmetic surgery needles Flexible non-metallic conduit Supply cylinder assemblies Alarm communication systems Identification products Flexible piping equipment Rayon balls

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3	4	5				

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THIS WEEK

BAG MAN

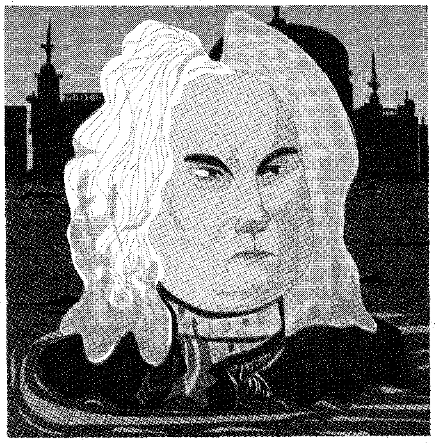
In the early twentieth century, Carl Sandburg would regularly play a few songs on his guitar to loosen up audiences before poetry readings. In 1927, he collected nearly three hundred folk ballads, hobo songs, and spirituals, and called the set "The American Songbag." Dan Zanes, the former Del Fuegos singer and guitarist, who has reinvented himself as a troubadour for children, recorded twenty-five "Songbag" selections for a new album, "Parades and Panoramas." He performs the rich collection of early Americana at Symphony Space with the help of a few friends, including the guitarist Marc Ribot and the singers Barbara Brousal and Cynthia Hopkins. (Oct. 2-3; see Night Life.)

THE COMPLETE RED ONE

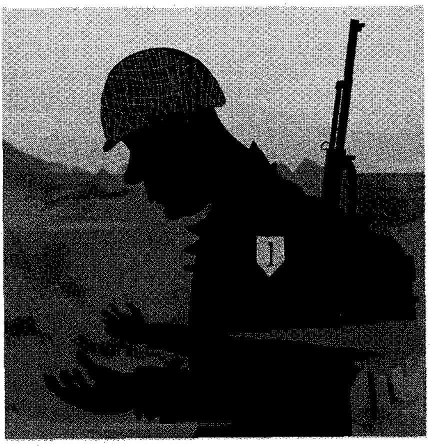
Samuel Fuller's 1980 epic, "The Big Red One," grew out of his experiences as an infantryman in the Second World War, but it couldn't accurately capture them: Fuller felt that for an audience to truly understand war they would have to be sprayed with gunfire throughout the movie. Never subtle, Fuller filled the film with emblematic moments—most famously, a closeup of a wristwatch on the arm of a dead soldier—and turned in an unmarketable first cut. That version has now been restored, offering audiences complete access to Fuller's vision of war. Thankfully, there's still no live ammunition. (Alice Tully Hall; Oct. 2; see Movies.)

BETTER EARLY THAN NEVER

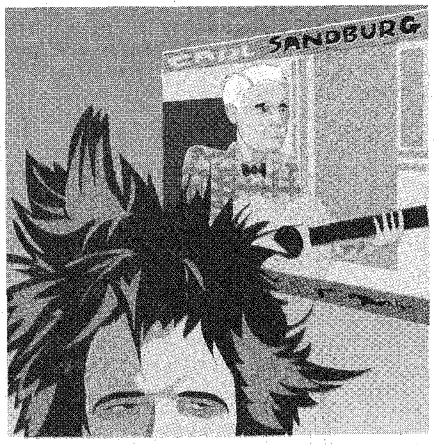
Performances of Handel's "Water Musick" and "Musick for the Royal Fireworks" will be the main event of the New York Early Music Celebration, a ten-day festival performed entirely by New York-area musicians. Frederick Renz, in his thirtieth year as the director of Early Music New York, conducts the gala concert, which will feature Handel's authentic orchestration for sixty players, at the Church of St. Ignatius Loyola. (Oct. 2; see Classical Music.)



The New York Early Music Celebration features works by Handel.

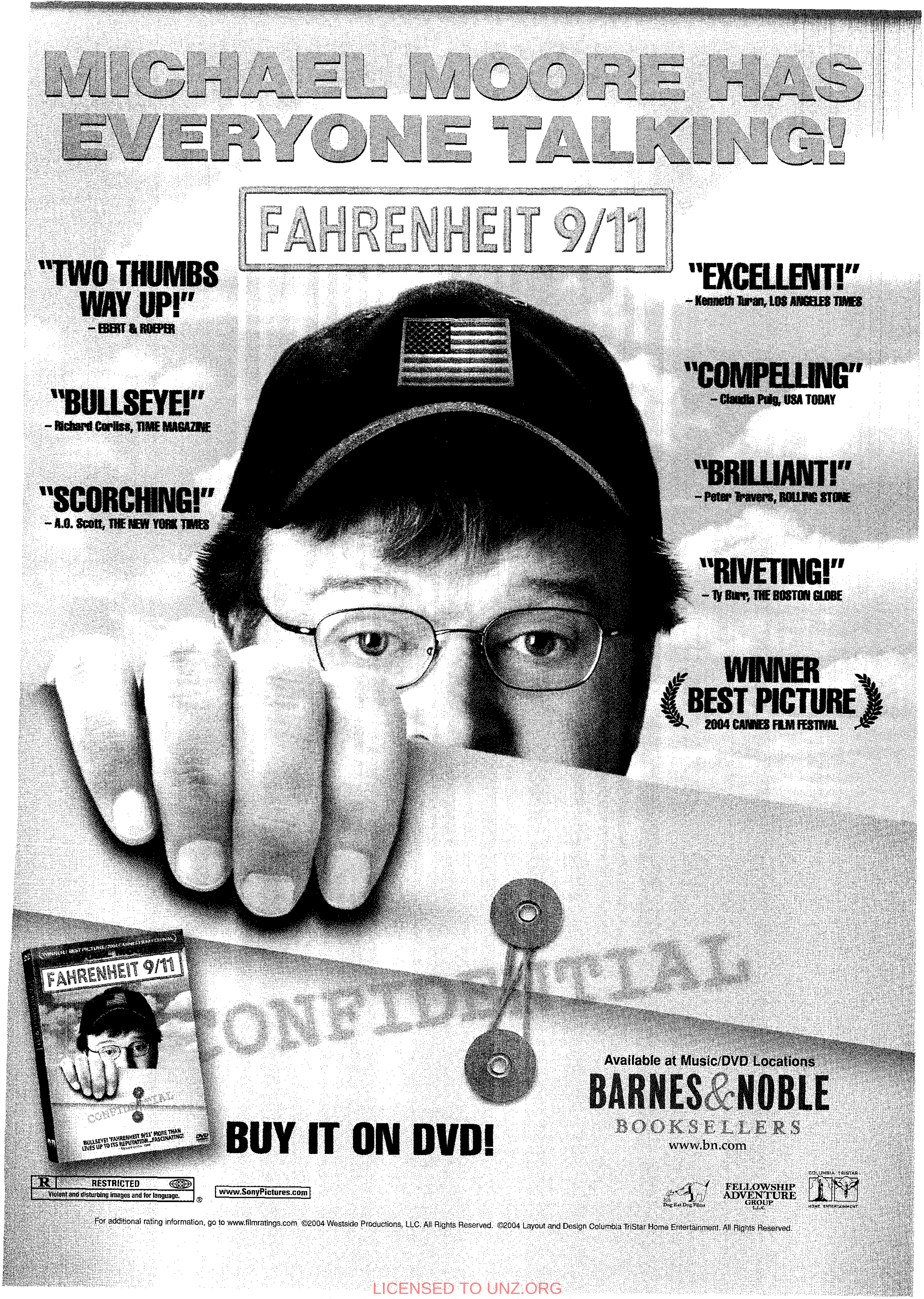


Samuel Fuller's "The Big Red One" screens at the New York Film Festival.



MAXIMILIAN BODE

Dan Zanes opens up Carl Sandburg's "American Songbag," at Symphony Space.



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– Kenneth Turan, LOS ANGELES TIMES

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– Claudia Puig, USA TODAY

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– Peter Travers, ROLLING STONE

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The Scottish rock band Franz Ferdinand plays Roseland (see Night Life).

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OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

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BROOKLYN THE MUSICAL
A young *Parisienne* named Brooklyn seeks fame and her long-lost father, in a new musical set in the heroine's namesake borough. Book, music, and lyrics by Mark Schoenfeld and Barri McPherson. Directed by Jeff Calhoun. In previews. (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

DIRTY TRICKS
A new play about Martha Mitchell, the outspoken wife of Nixon's attorney general, John Mitchell, who blabbed to the press during Watergate. Starring Judith Ivey. Written by John Jeter and directed by Margaret Whitton, with sets by Neil Patel. Previews begin Oct. 5. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 212-239-6200.)

LAST EASTER
M.C.C. presents a new play by Bryony Lavery ("Frozen"), about three people who take a terminally ill friend to Texas and Lourdes in search of a cure. Directed by Doug Hughes. In previews. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 212-279-4200.)

MRS. FARNSWORTH
Sigourney Weaver returns to the title role in the Flea's production of A. R. Gurney's play, in which a Connecticut wife writes about her scandalous college love affair with the current President. Danny Burstein plays her writing coach, and Gerry Bamman plays Mr. Farnsworth. Directed by Jim Simpson. Opens Sept. 29 at 3. (41 White St. 212-352-3101.)

NINE PARTS OF DESIRE
A play by the Iraqi-American playwright Heather Raffo is the season opener for Manhattan Ensemble Theatre. It's about the lives of Iraqi women, and is based on research and interviews conducted over the course of eleven years. Directed by Joanna Settle. In previews. (55 Mercer St. 212-239-6200.)

NOBODY'S LUNCH
The Civilians, an Obie-winning company, present a show about the politics of information. Written and directed by Steven Cosson, with songs by Michael Friedman. In previews. (P.S. 122, First Ave. at 10th St. 212-477-5288.)

OPEN DOORS
At Carnegie Hall, a musical tribute to Stephen Sondheim in honor of his seventieth birthday mixes narration by the composer with a revue of more than forty of his songs, sung by Kate Baldwin, Victoria Clark, Gregg Edelman, Jan Maxwell, and Eric Jordan Young, accompanied by piano (Rob Berman), cello (Mairi Dorman), and double bass and bass guitar (Dick Sarpola). Directed by David Kernan. Previews begin Sept. 30. Opens Oct. 5 at 7:30. (212-247-7800.)

OTHELLO
BAM's Next Wave Festival opens with a production by England's Cheek by Jowl theatre company. Directed by Declan Donnellan. Opens Oct. 5 at 7:30. (BAM's Harvey Theatre, 651 Fulton St. 718-636-4100.)

RECKLESS
Manhattan Theatre Club and Second Stage present the Broadway première of Craig Lucas's 1983 play about a woman who flees when she learns her husband has taken out a hit on her. Starring Mary-Louise Parker and Rosie Perez. Directed by Mark Brokaw. In previews. (Biltmore, 261 W. 47th St. 212-239-6200.)

RICHARD III
Peter Dinklage plays the King in the Public's season opener. Directed by Peter DuBois. In previews. (425 Lafayette St. 212-239-6200.)

TRYING
A play by Joanna McClelland Glass based on the twilight years of Francis Biddle (Fritz Weaver), an F.D.R.-era attorney general and a judge at the Nuremberg trials, who has a battle of wills with the young secretary (Kati Brazda) his wife has hired to put his office in order. Directed by Sandy Shinner. In previews. (Promenade Theatre, Broadway at 76th St. 212-239-6200.)

WHITE CHOCOLATE
In a satirical play by the longtime *New Yorker* cartoonist William Hamilton, a white Park Avenue couple wake up and discover they've become black. Reg E. Cathey, Julie Halston, and Lynn Whitfield lead the cast. Directed by David Schweizer. In previews. (Century Center for the Performing Arts, 111 E. 15th St. 212-239-6200.)

WOMEN ON THE VERGE
Two middle-aged Irish groupies journey to Donegal to hear their handsome idol sing, in a comedy by the Irish playwright Marie Jones. Directed by Lynne Taylor Corbett. One preview on Sept. 29. Opens Sept. 30 at 8. (Irish Arts Center, 553 W. 51st St. 212-868-4444.)

OPENED RECENTLY

THE BALD SOPRANO / THE LESSON
In Tina Howe's agile adaptation, Ionesco's "The Bald Soprano," inspired by a French-English conversation manual, becomes not merely absurd but uproarious. Two English couples meet in a bourgeois living room and make senseless small talk, interrupted frequently by a belligerent maid and a long-winded fireman. Michael Countryman and Jan Maxwell, as Mr. and Mrs. Smith, evoke a Monty Python parody of "Brief Encounter"; Seana Kofoed and Robert Stanton, as the benighted Martins, have a rare gift for physical comedy. In any other production, John Ellison Conlee, as the fireman, might steal the show, but here he fits right in. Howe has replaced the play's French references with British equivalents, not so much translating Ionesco as reanimating him. Carl Forsman directs with an assured command of verbal high jinks and comic timing. The evening's second play, "The Lesson," is anticlimactic. (336 W. 20th St. 212-239-6200.)

DRACULA, THE MUSICAL
When he enters the stage, wearing a long maroon brocade robe with cascades of ruffles at his neck and cuffs, his hair swept into a high white pompadour, the old neck-biter (Tom Hewitt) looks like a demented granny. After his first blood feast, his hair turns raven black. This is the first in a stream of tricks (flying nymphets, sliding doors, pop-out breasts) that whiz by in this new musical, which has been paced to hold the attention of a *Buffy*-loving, television-watching audience. Directed by Des McAnuff. (Belasco, 111 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.)

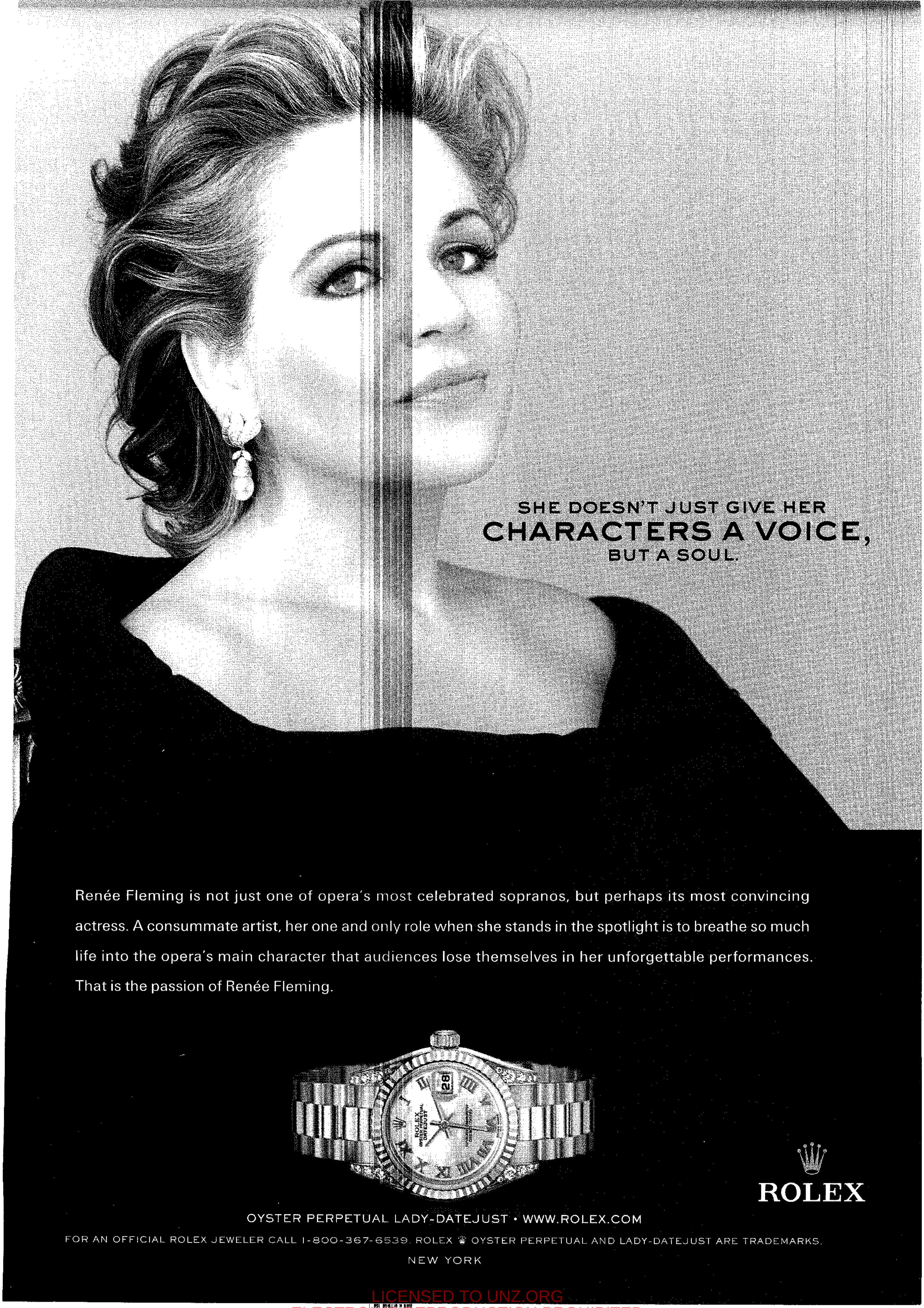
FINER NOBLE GASES
A group of once successful rock musicians wallow in drugged-out apathy in an East Village apartment, in a play by Adam Rapp. Directed by Michael Garcés. (Rattlestick Playwrights Theatre, 224 Waverly Pl., west of Seventh Ave., between W. 11th and Perry Sts. 212-868-4444.)

GEORGE & MARTHA
The performance artist Karen Finley is Martha Stewart and Neal Medlyn is George Bush in a play, written by Finley, that meshes the imagined personalities of the two public figures with the lead characters of Edward Albee's "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?" A Collective: Unconscious production, at the group's new space, in Tribeca. (279 Church St., at White St. 212-352-3101.)

GUANTÁNAMO: HONOR BOUND TO DEFEND FREEDOM
Victoria Brittain (a former foreign editor of the *Guardian*) and Gillian Slovo (the South African-born novelist) pull together a handful of stories about the men who have been imprisoned at Guantánamo Bay in the wake of 9/11, using interviews with detainees, letters, transcripts of political speeches, and lawyers' briefs. Directed by Nicolas Kent and Sacha Wares. (45 Bleecker Theatre, at 45 Bleecker St. 212-307-4100.)

HEDDA GABLER
The Flemish director Ivo van Hove, of Holland's Toneelgroep Amsterdam, brings his adaptation of Ibsen's play to New York Theatre Workshop. With sets by Jan Versweyveld. (79 E. 4th St. 212-239-6200.)

THE LEPERS OF BAILE BAISTE
Long-suppressed memories of sexual abuse by a priest in a small Irish town come to light when a local boy, now grown up, returns from abroad. The outline of Ronan Noone's 2002 play seems unfortunately familiar now, but the material is presented effectively and without preachiness. Directed by David Sullivan. (Phil Bosakowski, 354 W. 45th St. 212-868-4444.)



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NEW YORK

NEW YORK MUSICAL THEATRE FESTIVAL
This new festival showcases thirty-one new musicals. (For complete information on venues, performances, and show times, call 212-352-3101 or visit www.nymf.org. Through Oct. 3.)

THE OLDEST PROFESSION
The Signature Theatre Company's new season is dedicated to the works of Paula Vogel. It starts off with a comic drama, set during the early days of the Reagan Administration, about five aging bawds who struggle with arthritis and a diminishing clientele. Directed by David Esbjornson. (Peter Norton Space, 555 W. 42nd St. 212-244-7529.)

PEOPLE BE HEARD
Erica Schmidt ("Debbie Does Dallas") directs a new musical comedy, with songs by Quincy Long and music by Michael Roth, about a small town caught up in a heated debate about evolution. Choreographed by Peter Pucci. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200.)

PUGILIST SPECIALIST
The Riot Group, an experimental company from San Francisco, deals with a topical subject: the attempted assassination of a Middle Eastern leader, Big 'Stach, who sounds very much like Saddam Hussein. Although the show's notional subject is the Iraq war, its real theme is the minefield of military relationships. In a tightly constructed psychological drama, four Marines vie with one another for control of the "black op." Stephanie Viola plays a whistleblower and bomb expert who grows frustrated by the group's bad planning, and spars with a contentious lieutenant, part Hawkeye Pierce, part Eddie Haskell, played by Adriano Shaplin, who also wrote the play. Lieutenant Studdard (Drew Friedman) is an emotionless, laconic cameraman, who teams up with the most voluble of the four, Colonel John (Paul Schnabel), who orates rather than speaks. (59E59 Theatre, at 59 E. 59th St. 212-279-4200.)

ROSE RAGE
The Chicago Shakespeare Theatre performs an adaptation by Edward Hall and Roger Warren of Shakespeare's Henry VI trilogy. First developed and performed at England's Watermill Theatre, the production is set in a Victorian slaughterhouse. Throughout the play, a Greek chorus of masked butchers provides a dumb show of the abundant battles and beheadings—providing an effective contrast with the genteel, ruthless players. (Duke on 42nd St. 229 W. 42nd St. 212-239-6200.)

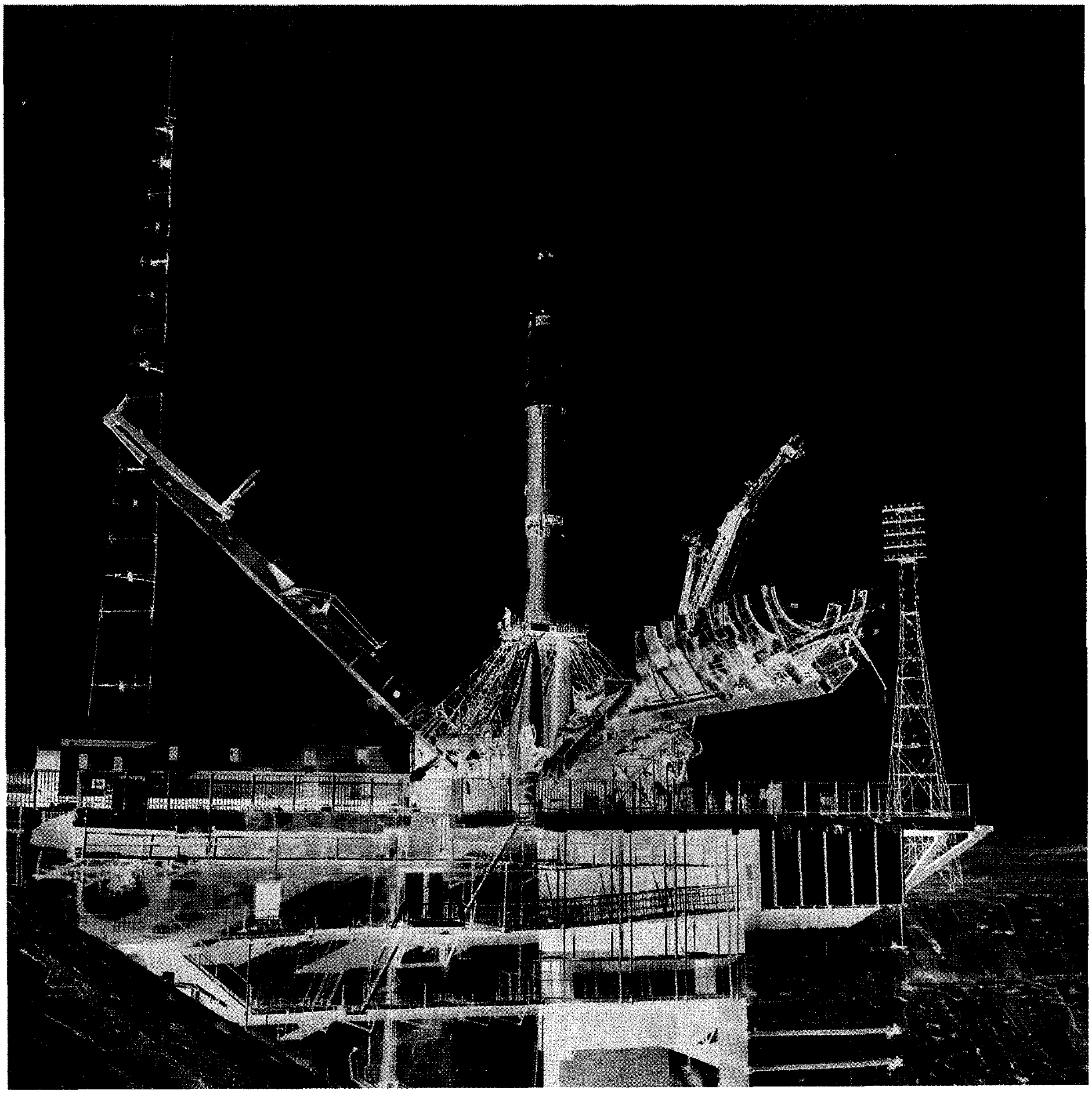
SLAVA'S SNOWSHOW
In this seriocomic spectacle by the Russian clown Slava Polunin, hobo clowns perform existential antics, culminating in a giant paper snowstorm that blows across the stage and onto the audience. (Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 212-505-0700.)

STRING OF PEARLS
Primary Stages presents a play by Michele Lowe about a necklace that disrupts the lives of the people who come in contact with it. Directed by Eric Simonson. (59E59 Theatre, at 59 E. 59th St. 212-279-4200.)

SYMPHONIE FANTASTIQUE
Berlioz's music accompanies the movement of inanimate objects through liquid in a thousand-gallon glass tank. Sheets blossom like blown roses; colored scraps of parachute material and spandex dart like pilot fish; tendrils of fringe spill and sway. The action, orchestrated by the master puppeteer Basil Twist, is created by five hardworking puppeteers in wetsuits. (Dodger Stages, 340 W. 50th St. 212-239-6200.)

DANCE

"FALL FOR DANCE"
Six nights of ballet, modern dance, hip-hop, tap, flamenco, African dance, kathak, and trapeze. Canonical works and cutting-edge pieces will be presented by groups that include the Merce Cunningham, Martha Graham, Trisha Brown, and Garth Fagan companies. (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 212-581-1212. For full schedule, visit www.citycenter.org. Through Oct. 3.)



"Erection of Soyuz TMA-3," a digitally manipulated ink-jet print by Lynn Davis, at Edwynn Houk (see Photography).

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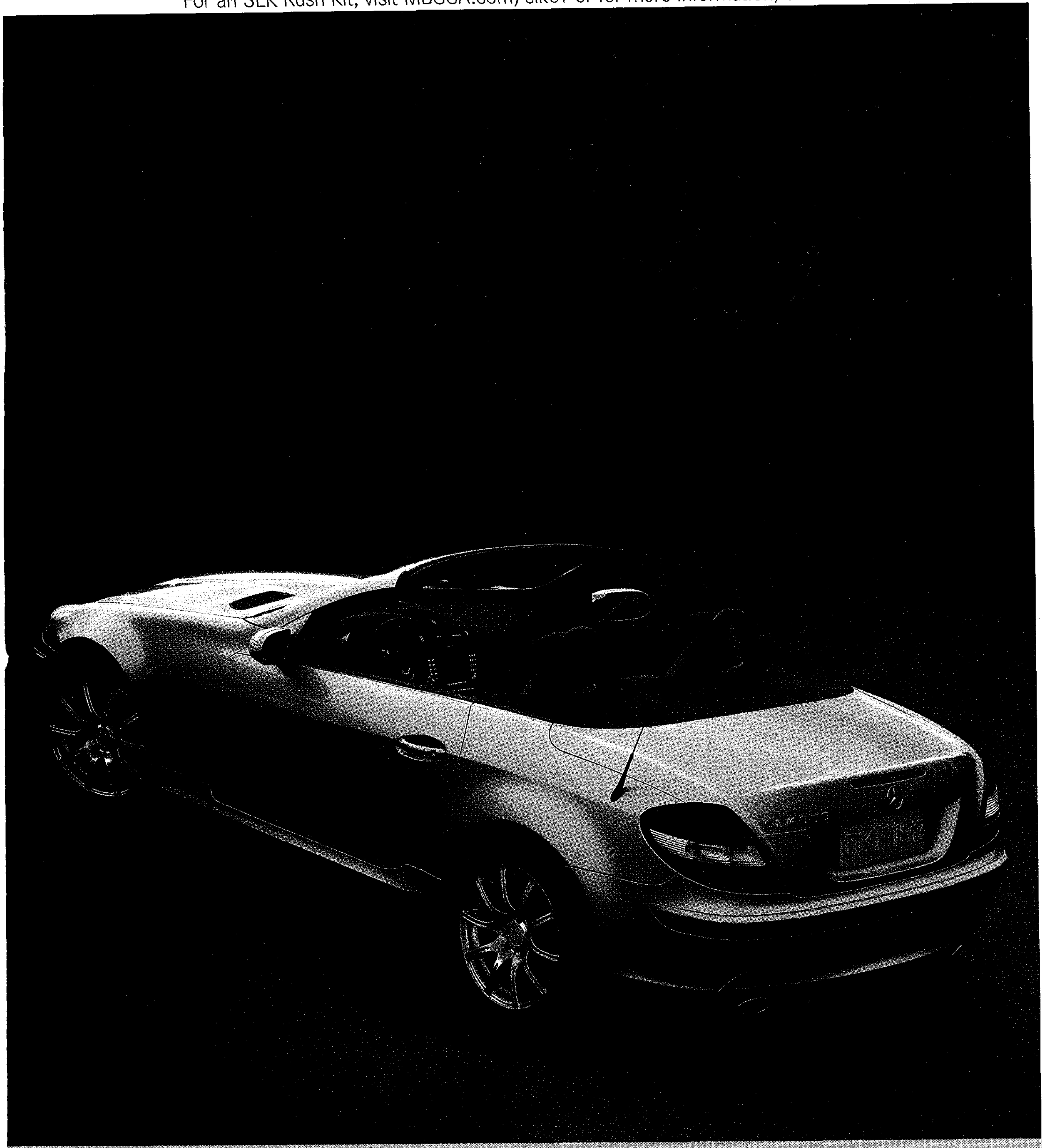

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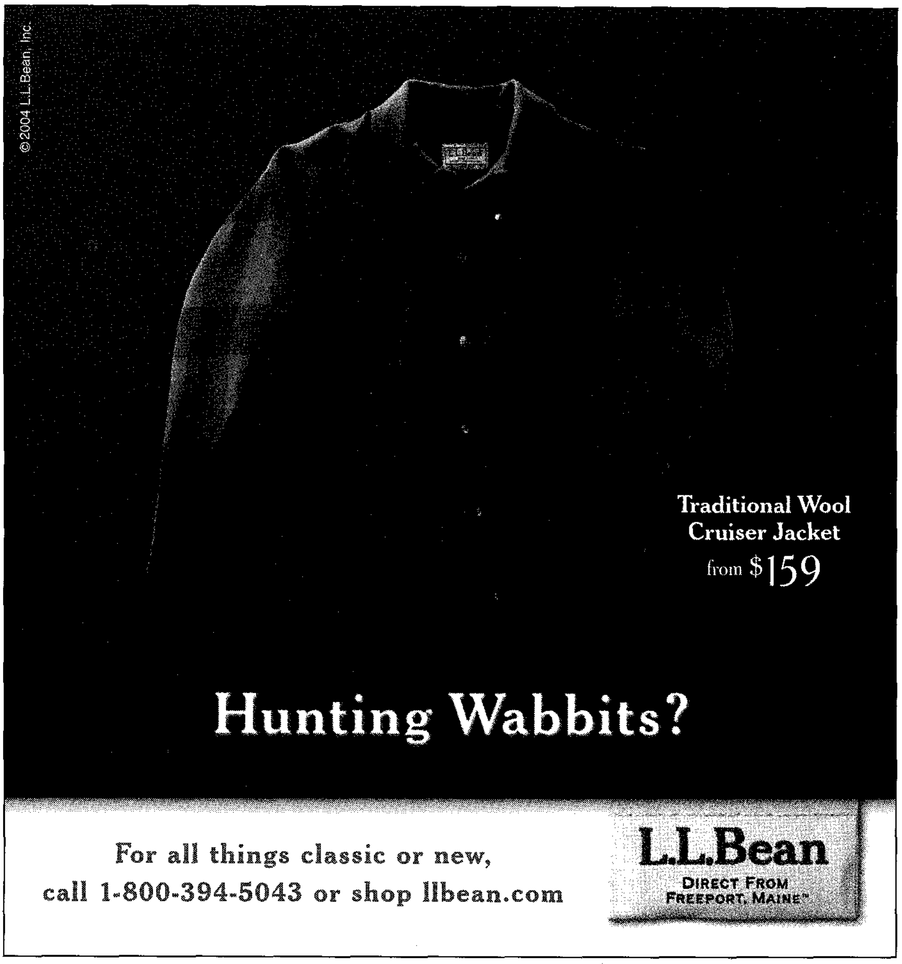
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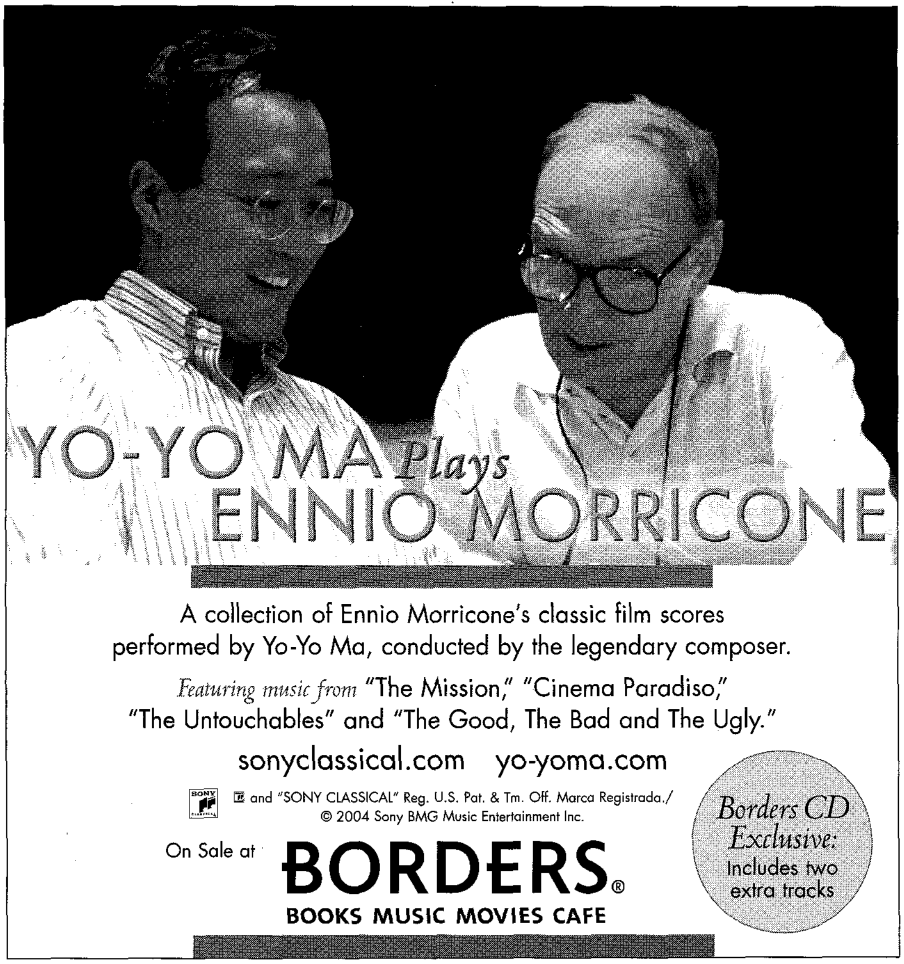
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POP NOTES

HEAVY HITTERS

In the nineties, Elvis Costello put out so much erratic material that he became an acquired taste; after his past few records, especially last year's dreary, torchy "North," it appeared that he might have to be deacquisitioned. **"The Delivery Man"** (Lost Highway), his newest, aims midway between the spare roots music of "King of America" and the unhinged intensity of "Blood & Chocolate," his two finest mid-eighties albums—and for a while, at least, it hits its target. "Button My Lip," the opening song, has a ferocious vocal, not to mention superb piano from Steve Nieve; "Monkey to Man" updates Dave Bartholomew's nineteen-fifties New Orleans R. & B. rap "The Monkey," arguing the case for devolution over a chugging, playful rhythm. Costello neatly reclaims a pair of soul songs he originally wrote for Howard Tate and Solomon Burke, but the guest vocalists Lucinda Williams (too screechy) and Emmylou Harris (too sweet) aren't used to great effect. The record was originally meant to revolve around the relationship between the title character and three women, but Costello thankfully abandoned his concept-album pretensions; what's left is proof that he has life left in him yet.

Tom Waits used to take years between records. These days he fires them out. **"Real Gone"** (Epitaph), his most recent CD, has a backstory: for the first time, Waits shut the lid on his piano, and the songs are filled with spiky guitar from Marc Ribot, who put his stamp on Waits's best eighties work. The results are excellent. The lyrics are predictably surreal; the vocals are more cavernous than ever; and the rhythms, when they're not roughing up the blues, borrow from Latin and island music. "Hoist That Rag," an indictment of American imperialism, has the force of an uppercut, and "Metropolitan Glide," the first-ever Tom Waits dance number, returns him to the urban world after years as a rustic. "Real Gone" is real long, which isn't necessarily a problem: "Sins of the Father," a simmering blues that is one of the album's strongest songs, runs more than ten minutes.

—*Ben Greenman*

"FOREVER TANGO"

Luis Bravo's evening of Argentine dance features fourteen dancers and an eleven-piece orchestra. The show has returned to the Shubert for a two-month stay following a successful run this summer. (225 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.)

LIMÓN DANCE COMPANY

The company's season at the Joyce continues, with two programs that run in rotation. The first pairs "The Unsung," José Limón's all-male tribute to the American Indian, with "Extreme Beauty," an ensemble piece created for women in the company by Susanne Linke. The evening concludes with Lar Lubovitch's "Concerto Six Twenty-Two." The second program features the ensemble piece "Psalm" and the 1942 solo "Chaconne" and also includes Jírí Kylián's "Evening Songs," set to Dvořák's choral hymn. (175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 212-242-0800. Program A: Sept. 29-Oct. 2 at 8 and Oct. 3 at 2. Program B: Sept. 30 at 8, Oct. 2 at 2, and Oct. 3 at 7:30.)

"GAJAMUKHA: DANCES OF INDIA"

In his portrait of the Hindu elephant god Gajamukha, or Ganesha, the choreographer Jayanthi Raman draws on three dance forms: bharata natyam, which has scripted gestures; the flamboyant, more free-form *kuchipudi*; and the quiet, seductive *mohiniattam*. Raman has gained permission from temple priests to include several rituals that are almost never performed in public. With seven dancers and a five-member orchestra. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 212-864-5400. Oct. 2 at 8.)

"OKINAWA KUMIODORI"
The Okinawa Culture Association presents dances native to its islands, both boisterous folk dance and stylized works of *kumiodori,* an eighteenth-century form of dance theatre similar to Kabuki and Noh. In "Nido Tekiuchi," two brothers disguise themselves as dancing girls to avenge their father's murder; in "Shusin Kaneiri," monks help a samurai fight off the advances of a demon woman. (Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St. 212-752-3015. Sept. 30-Oct. 2 at 7:30 and Oct. 3 at 2.)

BIG DANCE THEATRE: "PLAN B"
Goldilocks meets "Twin Peaks" in a dance-theatre piece by Annie-B Parson and Paul Lazar set in a surreal woods. A lost waif (Tymberly Canale) finds a bear skin on the forest floor, drapes it around herself, and then exchanges it for a frock coat offered by a puckish woodswoman (Kate Johnson). The two perform a nested dance, legs at forty-five-degree angles, toes pointing, like a two-layered jumping jack. With Lazar and Molly Hickok, who hide out in a transparent cabin, stalking the waif with a brainwashing tape recorder and a toy gun. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 212-924-0077. Sept. 29-Oct. 2 at 7:30. Through Oct. 9.)

MOLISSA FENLEY AND DANCERS
In the first of two weeks at the Kitchen, Molissa Fenley and Dancers present the new ensemble work "Lava Field," set to an original electronic score by John Bischoff. Four dancers braid in and around each other, evoking two kinds of lava the choreographer observed on trips to Hawaii: the slow-moving, viscous pahoehoe, which twists around itself, and the fast-moving, dangerous aa (pronounced "ah-ah"). The evening also includes last year's "Kuro Shio," named for a Japanese ocean current and set to a score by Bun-Ching Lam, and "Water Courses," an ensemble piece that accompanies a chant by the poet Joy Harjo. In the second week, look for a new staging of Fenley's 1983 BAM piece "Hemispheres," with a reworked score by the composer, Anthony Davis, performed live by the Kitchen's House Blend band. (512 W. 19th St. 212-255-5793, ext. 11. Sept. 29-Oct. 2 at 8. Through Oct. 9.)

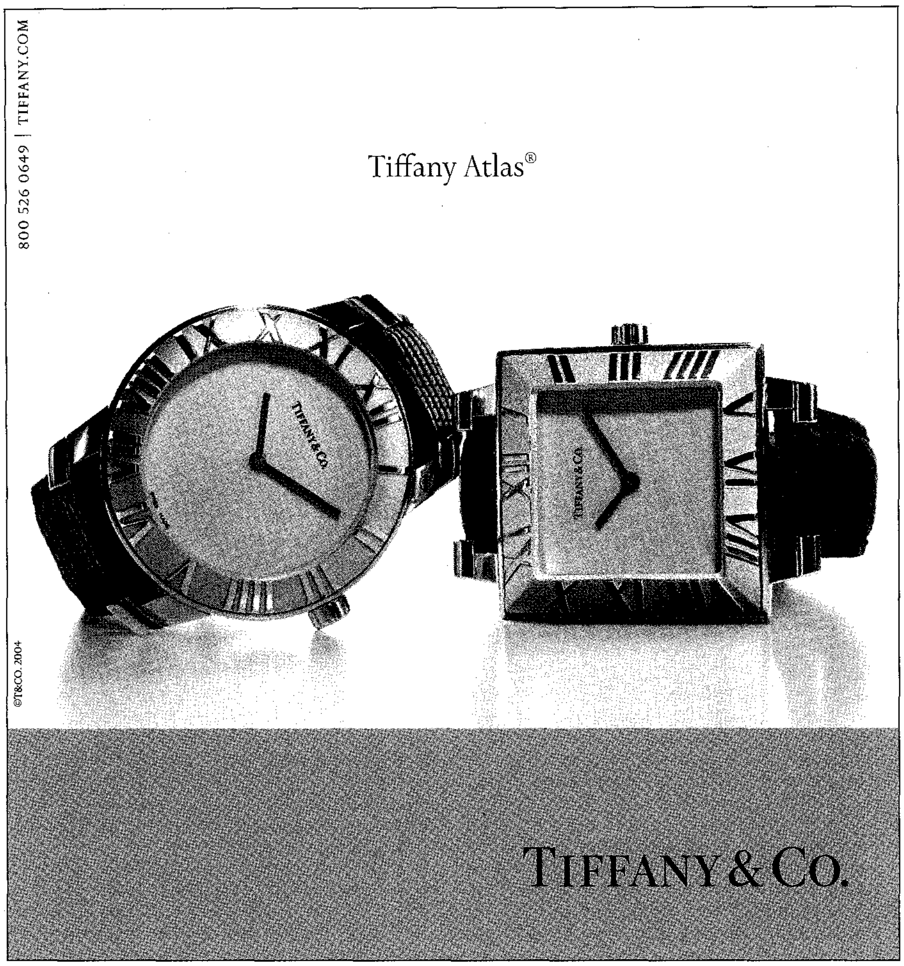
"ART OF THE CHACONNE"
In Spain, where it originated in the seventeenth century, the chaconne was considered so illicit that those who were caught dancing it faced public whippings. A Baroque chamber concert by Music at Brooklyn Friends traces the musical evolution of the dance in Italy, England, France, and Germany, where it had its apotheosis in the Chaconne from Bach's Partita in D Minor for Unaccompanied Violin. Patricia Beaman performs two chaconnes (one sombre in mood, the other light) while dressed in eighteenth-century French costume—a corseted silk brocade dress, panniers, wig, and mask. Claire Jolivet plays the Bach solo. (Brooklyn Friends Meeting House, 110 Schermerhorn St., between Smith St. and Boerum Pl. No tickets necessary. Oct. 1 at 8.)

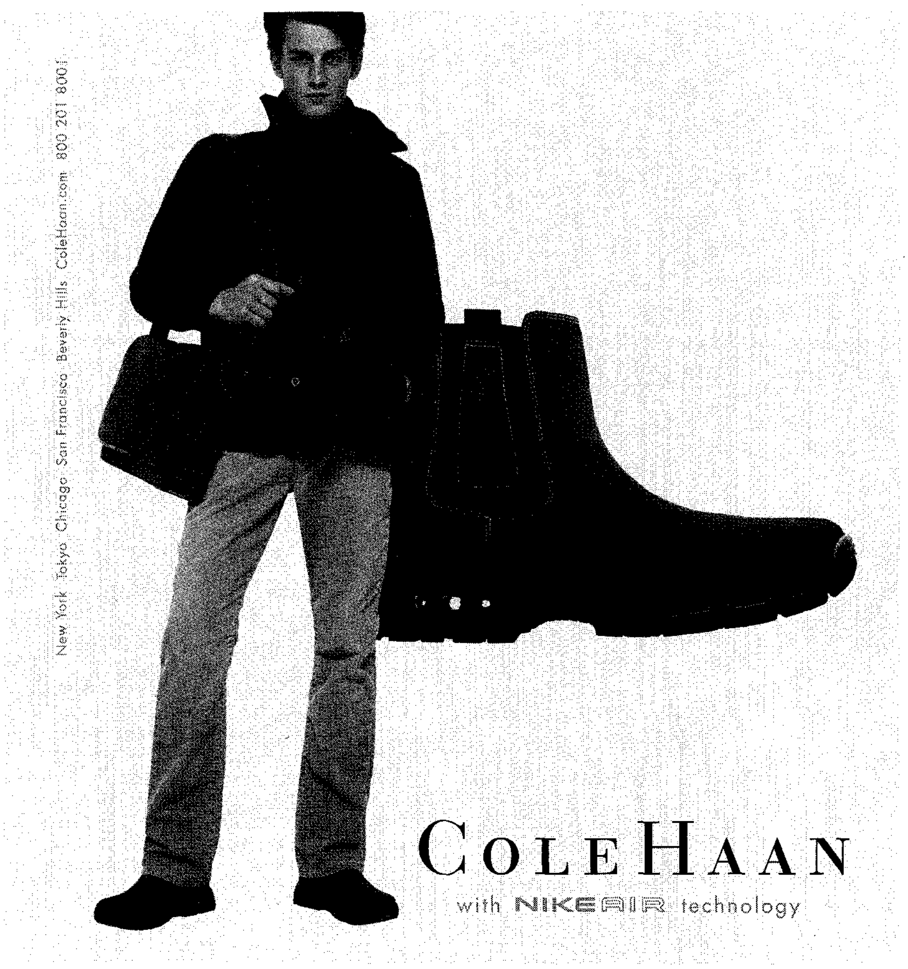
ANNA MYER AND DANCERS
Nine dancers join with a dozen string musicians from the Juilliard School to present the première of "All at Once," set to a score by the Russian-born composer Jakov Jakoulov, conducted by Susan Davenny Wyner. (Danspace Project, St. Mark's In-the-Bowery, Second Ave. at 10th St. 212-674-8194. Sept. 30-Oct. 3 at 8:30.)

NIGHT LIFE
CONCERTS

FLOGGING MOLLY
Spiritual descendants of the Pogues, these Los Angeles rockers give traditional Celtic folk music the amphetamine rush of punk. (Roseland, 239 W. 52nd St. 212-307-7171. Sept. 29 at 7:30.)

MICHEL CAMILO
It doesn't take much to get the pianist Camilo to turn on the heat. His expansive technique, modern-

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jazz sensibilities, and Latin leanings recently brought him a Grammy Award. (Alice Tully Hall. 212-875-5456. Sept. 29 at 8.)

COLONEL CLAYPOOL'S BUCKET OF BERNIE BRAINS
Les Claypool, the bass-thwacking Primus front man, embarks on yet another project. His associates this time around are the erstwhile Primus drummer, Brain, the renowned Parliament and Talking Heads keyboardist, Bernie Worrell, and the eccentric guitar warlock (and brief Guns N' Roses hire), Buckethead. The group has a dizzying pedigree, but don't expect any familiar hits—this band prides itself on performing entirely original, improvisational music. (Roseland. Oct. 1 at 8.)

WORLD MUSIC INSTITUTE
Fado is Portugal's take on the blues, a throaty, plaintive cry that speaks of heartache and loneliness; **Cristina Branco,** who has a highly cathartic delivery, is one of her country's most passionate practitioners. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. For more information, call 212-545-7536. Oct. 1 at 8.)

CHILE PEPPER FIESTA
The Brooklyn Botanic Garden is the place for mole, salsa, and piping hot music with **Guy Davis, Sleepy LaBeef,** and others. Davis, the son of the actors and writers Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee, is out to prove that the rural blues are a relevant art form, and he's not afraid to go to great lengths to make his case. His latest album, "Legacy," incorporates acoustic guitar, banjo, mandolin, and even rap. He performs on Oct. 2 at 1 and 2:30. LaBeef is an Arkansas boy who is reputed to know more than six thousand songs; his sets are always full of surprises. He takes the stage on Oct. 3 at 2:30. (1000 Washington Ave., Brooklyn. For more information, call 718-623-7333, or visit www.bbg.org. Oct. 2-3 from noon to 5:30.)

PATTI SMITH AND HER BAND / TELEVISION
These two groups were significant members of the mid-seventies punk-rock scene. Three decades later, they command bigger rooms than they once did, but their repertoire remains just as incendiary. (Roseland. Oct. 2 at 7:30.)

DAN ZANES
Performing material from his new release, "Parades and Panoramas." (See This Week.) (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 212-864-5400. Oct. 2 at 11 A.M. and 2 and Oct. 3 at noon.)

FRANZ FERDINAND
The erudite post-punk outfit from Scotland produces jerky guitar-based pop that sounds like the Strokes after a few terms at the Sorbonne. (Roseland. Oct. 3 at 7:30.)

CLUBS

Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.

B. B. KING BLUES CLUB & GRILL
237 W. 42nd St. (212-997-4144)—Oct. 3: The "Unity Jam" steps back in time with **Rob Base, Melle Mel,** and other old-school hip-hop artists.

BOWERY BALLROOM
6 Delancey St. (212-533-2111)—Oct. 1: A night of heady Southern rock with the country singer **Tift Merritt.** Oct. 2-3: The refreshing and nerve-rattling blues-rock of the **Black Keys,** a drums-and-guitar duo out of Akron, Ohio.

FEZ
380 Lafayette St. (212-533-7000)—Oct. 1-2: The **Loser's Lounge** tips its hat to David Bowie. The **Mingus Big Band** still packs them in every Thursday.

IRVING PLAZA
17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (212-777-6800)—Sept. 30: The singer-songwriter **Michelle Shocked.** Oct. 1-2: **They Might Be Giants.** The unapologetically quirky duo of John Flansburgh and John Linnell has been making willfully clever, skewed pop since the mid-eighties. Oct. 4-5: Early in their career, the **Killers** left their native Las Vegas and moved to the U.K. in order to be a part of the landscape that gave birth to their favorite bands. They won over the Brits and returned to the States this summer. Their New Wave-inspired pop is not that original, but they have a lethal knack for catchy hooks. With **Ambulance Ltd.**

JOE'S PUB
425 Lafayette St. (212-539-8777)—Sept. 30: The spooky Americana of **Jesse Sykes and the Sweet Hereafter.** Oct. 5: The Haitian singer **Emeline Michel** celebrates the release of her new album, "Rasin Kreyol."

KNITTING FACTORY
74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (212-219-3055)—Sept. 29: The young blue-eyed soul singer **Marc Broussard,** who was born and raised in Louisiana, has a voice as rich as the smokiest roux. Oct. 2: The **Asylum Street Spankers,** an energetic group of acoustic-blues-loving musicians out of Austin, Texas.

TABLES FOR TWO

KENKA
25 St. Marks Pl. (212-254-6363)—The sight of throwback punks with kohl-rimmed eyes is not unusual on this scuzzy stretch of St. Marks Place. One young lady, wearing plaid suspenders over a bustier and sitting on a stoop, shouted at a bunch of Japanese kids waiting in front of Kenka: "Don't eat sushi! Fish have to die to make sushi!" But she needn't have worried. Kenka is the kind of snack shop and tavern known as an *izakaya* in Japan. It serves more than a hundred dishes, but no sushi.

The crowd in the low-ceilinged room is boisterous, partly because of the drinks (dollar-fifty draft beers and a wide selection of vodkalike cocktails made from distilled rice) and partly because of the music (singsong fifties and sixties Japanese pop blaring from gray loudspeakers). The Japanese menu is written on slips of paper and tacked to the walls; the English translations, though, are almost as baffling. "Nostalgic Japanese ham cutlet" is a popular dish, frequently sold out. "Grilled eel inside cooked egg" may sound like a magic trick, but there's no shell involved. On the other hand, nothing could be simpler than grilled corn on the cob drenched with a sweet, syrupy sauce.

The Japanese staff gamely tries to explain things—the whole fried frog, the rabbit miso soup—but with so many dishes costing only two or three dollars you might as well just keep ordering. Be careful, though, not to lose track of what is what. On a recent late night, a table that had consumed a few cheap beers forgot it had ordered bull penis. When the dish arrived and the diners looked puzzled, the waitress blushed, said "Cow . . .," pointed demurely downward, and then retreated to the kitchen with a giggle. The brave fellow who sampled the dish reported it to be very tender and fatty. It's easy to spot the other tables—Japanese and not—who have taken the same risk. One diner sat frozen, staring with horror at the white glob in her chopsticks while her friends held their breath. (Open daily for dinner. Entrées $3-$18.)

—*Owen Phillips*

LIVING ROOM
154 Ludlow St. (212-533-7235)—Oct. 3: The exceptional Cuban guitarist and singer **Juan-Carlos Formell,** the son of Los Van Van leader Juan Formell (and grandson of the noted arranger Francisco Formell). Monday nights: **Jim Campilongo** holds court. American music is a melting pot of influences, but few guitarists capture the nuances as well as Campilongo does, laying down country licks next to blues lines and jazz riffs with virtuosity.

MERCURY LOUNGE
217 E. Houston St. (212-260-4700)—Oct. 1: The hard-living Oregon trio **Dead Moon** has been playing darkly gritty punk rock for seventeen years without the slightest concession to the mainstream. Oct. 2-3: The Japanese all-girl garage band the **5.6.7.8.'s** hung up their beehives at the end of the nineties, but they came out of retirement after Quentin Tarantino used their music last year in "Kill Bill—Vol. 1." They lack musical chops and they have an awkward grasp of English, but these shortcomings are dwarfed by their feverish enthusiasm and giddy devotion to kitschy trash culture from the fifties.

SATALLA
37 W. 26th St. (212-576-1155)—Oct. 2: The moving Brazilian guitarist **Vinicius Cantuária.** Later that night, the Malian singer **Ramatou Diakite** takes over.

S.O.B.'S
204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (212-243-4940)—Sept. 29: One of the original voices of righteous indignation, **Gil Scott-Heron** is back to preach revolution to the faithful.

SOUTHPAW
125 Fifth Ave., Park Slope, Brooklyn (718-230-0236)—Sept. 29: **Gift of Gab,** of the Los Angeles rap group Blackalicious. Oct. 3: **Tift Merritt** (see the Bowery Ballroom).

TONIC
107 Norfolk St. (212-358-7503)—Oct. 1: A rare appearance by **Steve Mackay** and **Nik Turner,** two rock saxophonists from a long-lost era. Mackay is a free-jazz associate of the Stooges whose most memorable playing occurred on the group's 1970 masterpiece, "Funhouse." Turner, who doubles on flute, was a founding member of the pioneering late-sixties British act Hawkwind, an idiosyncratic heavy-metal group with sci-fi elements. Also on the bill is **Barbez,** a multilingual Brooklyn-based ensemble that includes a brilliant theremin player and a full-throated Russian singer.

WEBSTER HALL
125 E. 11th St. (212-353-1600)—Oct. 2: The high-octane power pop of England's **Supergrass.**

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

ALGONQUIN HOTEL
59 W. 44th St. (212-840-6800)—The vocalist **Stacey Kent** is in the Oak Room through Oct. 2, offering a program of songs by the likes of Cole Porter, George Gershwin, and Lerner and Loewe. She's out of town on Oct. 1, and the singer **KT Sullivan** and the pianist **Mark Nadler** will be covering for her with a slate of Sondheim songs. Starting Oct. 5: The pianist **Bill Charlap** joins his mom, the vocalist **Sandy Stewart.**

BLUE NOTE
131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (212-475-8592)—Through Oct. 3: Five of today's most significant and distinctive tenor saxophonists—**Frank Wess, David Sanchez, James Carter, David (Fathead) Newman,** and **Jimmy Heath**—pay homage to the father of the jazz tenor saxophone, Coleman Hawkins, on the centennial of his birth.

FEINSTEIN'S AT THE REGENCY
540 Park Ave., at 61st St. (212-339-4095)—Through Oct. 8: It's been some forty years since the comedian and entertainer **Robert Klein** became mainstream, but he can still make us laugh. He'll have plenty to work with, given the surreal aspects of contemporary American society.

55 BAR
55 Christopher St. (212-929-9883)—Sept. 30: The young saxophonist **Marcus Strickland** has already paid his dues performing with such prestigious units as the Lincoln Center and Carnegie Hall jazz orchestras, as well as with Roy Haynes and Lonnie Plaxico. Oct. 1: The pianist **Uri Caine** can think big (he likes to rework Mahler and Bach). His trio is more conventional, but equally satisfying.

IRIDIUM
1650 Broadway, at 51st St. (212-582-2121)—Sept. 28-29: **Sexmob,** the slide trumpeter Steven Bernstein's madcap band. Oct. 1-3: The **Ravi Coltrane** quartet. Few jazz musicians have had to cope with expectations as high as the ones this smart saxophonist faces. He has handled the pressure gracefully, and has etched out a style of his own. Mondays belong to the electric-guitar innovator **Les Paul.**

JAZZ STANDARD
116 E. 27th St. (212-576-2232)—Sept. 30-Oct. 3: The Panamanian pianist **Danilo Perez,** who has lately attracted attention in Wayne Shorter's band. Leading a trio, he is a feisty and culturally inclusive improviser.

NEUE GALERIE
1048 Fifth Ave., at 86th St. (212-628-6200, ext. 107)—Sept. 30: The vocalist **Andy Bey** tries his hand at American and German classics from between the wars.

VILLAGE VANGUARD
178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (212-255-4037)—**Brad Mehldau** is a pianist who is as comfortable with the work of Schubert and Radiohead as he is with more conventional jazz fare. Through Oct. 3 he replaces his established trio with a quartet. It features his old friends the saxophonist **Mark Turner**, the bassist **Larry Grenadier**, and the drummer **Jeff Ballard**. The **Vanguard Jazz Orchestra** holds sway on Mondays.

ART

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (212-879-5500)—**"The Colonial Andes: Tapestries and Silverwork, 1530-1830."** Through Dec. 12. ♦ **"Artists' Artists,"** a gathering of portraits of and by artists. Through Nov. 14. ♦ **"All That Glitters Is Not Gold: The Art, Form, and Function of Gilt Bronze in the French Interior."** Through Feb. 20, 2005. ♦ **"Art Deco Paris."** Through Feb. 27, 2005. ♦ **"Hidden Jewels: Korean Art from the Mary Griggs Burke Collection."** Through Jan. 9, 2005. ♦ **"German Drawings and Prints from the Weimar Republic (1919-33)."** Through Oct. 31. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
The museum is closed until Nov. 20, when it will reopen in its renovated and expanded building at 11 W. 53rd St.

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (212-423-3500)—The Guggenheim has the largest collection of work by Vasily Kandinsky in the United States, and its curators have decided to devote one gallery to his work permanently. **"Kandinsky Gallery: An Inaugural Selection"** kicks things off. Through May 11, 2005. ♦ Selections from the permanent collection are on display. (Open Saturdays through Wednesdays, 10 to 5:45, and Fridays, 10 to 8.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART
Madison Ave. at 75th St. (212-570-3676)—**"Memorials of War."** Through Nov. 28. ♦ **"Pop/Concept: Highlights from the Permanent Collection."** Through Oct. 24. ♦ **"Evidence of Impact: Art and Photography 1963-1978."** Through Oct. 10. (Open Wednesdays, Thursdays, and weekends, 11 to 6, and Fridays, 1 to 9.)

CHELSEA ART MUSEUM
556 W. 22nd St. (212-255-0719)—**"Agnes Denes: Projects for Public Spaces."** Through Nov. 6. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, noon to 6, and Thursday evenings until 8.)

FEDERAL HALL NATIONAL MONUMENT
26 Wall St. (212-945-0505)—**"The Medici on Wall Street"** brings twenty Italian portraits from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, on loan from the Uffizi, to the heart of the financial district. The subjects wear ruff collars instead of power ties, but their tensed postures and unflappable auras make them seem right at home amid today's masters of the universe—even the ruthless-looking children carry sceptres. Through Nov. 12. (Oct. 1 to Oct. 10, open daily, 9 to 5; Oct. 11 to Nov. 12, open Mondays through Fridays, 9 to 5.)

RUBIN MUSEUM OF ART
150 W. 17th St. (212-620-5000)—This new museum, Manhattan's first devoted entirely to Himalayan art, celebrates its grand opening on Saturday, Oct. 2, and Sunday, Oct. 3. Admission is free, and special activities will include storytelling, games, music, a street fair, and a pageant for dogs of Himalayan descent. The official opening ceremony starts with a flag-raising at 10 A.M. on Saturday. (Open Tuesdays and Saturdays, 11 to 7; Wednesdays and Sundays, 11 to 5; and Thursdays and Fridays, 11 to 9.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.

GEORG BASELITZ
Paintings from 1969-71, all inverted portraits and landscapes that were part of Baselitz's effort to change the way viewers considered form and perspective. Through Oct. 30. (Gagosian, 980 Madison Ave. 212-744-2313.)

RICHARD DEACON
Deacon's new sculptures look like giant curled pencil shavings or ribbon candy, their roller-coaster curves made from bent, glued, and riveted wood. Two dimpled stainless-steel sculptures propped against a wall—"Infinity #24" and "Infinity #26"—explore flatness rather than the cascading volume and supersized biomorphic forms that Deacon is generally known for. There's also a table of found objects: a gnarled piece of wood resembling an elephant or a boar's head, a spur of bone that looks like a weather-worn Minoan sculpture, a little branch suggesting a human torso. Through Oct. 7. (Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. 212-977-7160.)

JOHN FUNT
Funt, a former designer at Tiffany's and the son of Allen Funt, the creator of "Candid Camera," presents "Grasslands," a series of sweeping estuarial vistas dominated by long, wind-tossed grasses in the foreground. Funt favors cloudy-day palettes of greens and grays shifting subtly into pale purples and fading blues. The wide-screen format announces representational intent; the jewel-like undertones and simplified forms reveal the fundamental decorative impulse. Through Oct. 9. (James Graham, 1014 Madison Ave., at 78th St. 212-535-5767.)

"THREE CLASSICS"
Large paintings from the early seventies by Robert Motherwell, Frank Stella, and Helen Frankenthaler. Through Oct. 30. (Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St. 212-794-0550.)

Short List

DANIEL JOSEPH MARTINEZ
The Project, 37 W. 57th St.
212-688-4673. Through Oct. 2.

PAM SHEEHAN
Davis & Langdale, 231 E. 60th St.
212-838-0333. Through Oct. 2.

GALLERIES—CHELSEA

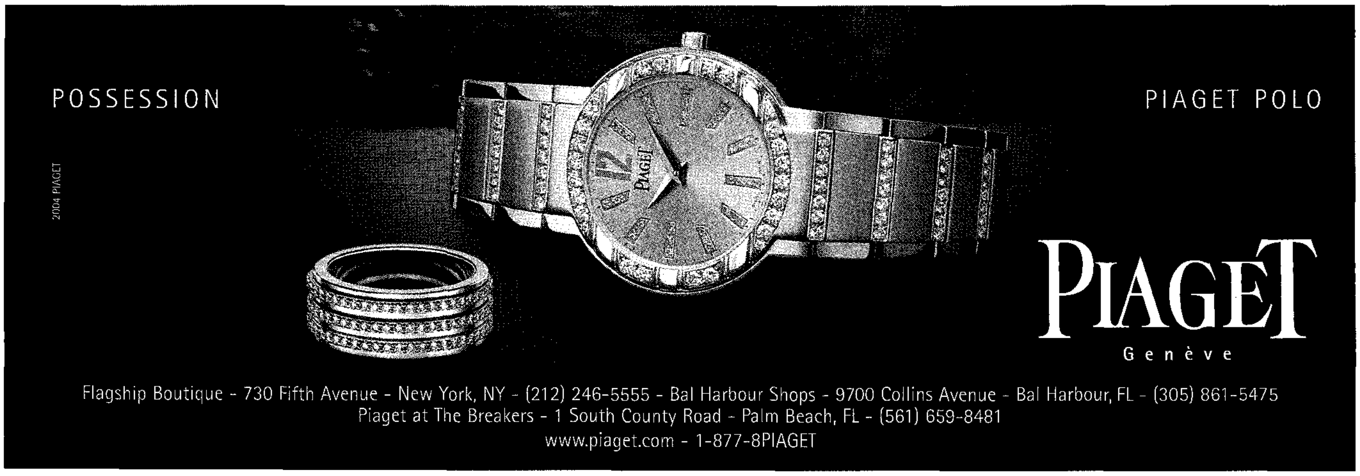
GEORG BASELITZ
In his paintings, on view at the uptown Gagosian gallery, Baselitz insists on the upside down. As a sculptor, he also puts the spotlight on a single technical decision. The less famous sculptures, which he hews out of one or two large pieces of wood with a chain saw and an axe, concentrate on simple figures—Madonna and child, man with hat, girl. Their sheer size and burly sensuality is refreshing, especially for those viewers tired of his habit of putting heads where hindquarters should be. Through Oct. 30. (Gagosian, 555 W. 24th St. 212-741-1111.)

RICHMOND BURTON
This painter has worked with dark geometric monoliths, swooping strokes of paint, oozing blobs of color, and canvases covered with an almost iridescent arrangement of scales and nets. The current show is equally beautiful, new, and exploratory, concentrating on works in three divergent styles united by bright palettes and strong contrasts. No breakthroughs, no complaints. Through Oct. 16. (Cheim & Read, 547 W. 25th St. 212-242-7727.)

BRICE DELLSPERGER
A gallery increasingly devoted to the conceptual dismantling of cinema features three cheerily deranged videos based on David Lynch's "Mulholland Drive," Stanley Kubrick's "A Clockwork Orange," and the B-movie classic "Flash Gordon." The centerpiece is "Body Double 18," a sprawling, three-channel video projection in which drag queens reënact a masturbation scene from the Lynch film. "A Clockwork Orange" is also given the drag treatment, with the original sound and dialogue from a torture scene. The videos are hit or miss, but the idea of typecasting has rarely been so thoroughly deconstructed—or campy. It seems almost redundant to go after "Flash Gordon." Through Oct. 2. (Team, 527 W. 26th St. 212-279-9219.)

KIRSTEN HASSENFELD
Fantastic sculptures whimsically contrived from white paper. Hassenfeld's cut, folded, rolled, and glued *objets*—many of which are lit from within—are strange hybrids of wedding cakes and faceted jewels, ivory cameos, crystal chandeliers, and ornate furniture. Through Oct. 9. (Bellwether, 134 Tenth Ave. 212-929-5959.)

ALEX KATZ
Katz, in collaboration with *W* magazine, renders a gallery's worth of luminous, well-known women—Christy, Martha, Kiki, Tilda, Mariko, and, sweetly, his own wife and most frequent subject, Ada. They



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all appear to be less themselves than they are classic Katzes—sharply side-lit, reduced to two simple colors, with one or two well-drawn features popping expertly out of the poster-board flatness. The project, a homage that matched fame and high fashion, turns out to be more of an exercise in the artist's ability to create luminescence out of the drab palette of power couture—khakis, navies, creams, and taupes. Through Oct. 9. (Pace Wildenstein, 534 W. 25th St. 212-929-7000.)

ON KAWARA
The remains of a day for Kawara amount to a canvas with the date painted in a white sans-serif typeface on a monochrome field. Forty years of his date paintings are represented here, one from every year of the project, which was initiated on January 4, 1966. Read them as meditations on consciousness or the passing of time, or as blank conceptual memorials. After all, what happened on "January 25, 1966"? And why does "March 18, 1970" deserve three panels? Kawara remains tight-lipped on the correlation between days and events. September 11th is absent, but history seeps into one work: a triptych titled "One Thing, 1965, Vietnam," painted in white against a blood-red field. Through Oct. 16. (David Zwirner, 525 W. 19th St. 212-727-2070.)

PIPILOTTI RIST
Nothing appears more time-bound than the signature nonsense of an era, a trap that Rist risks falling into with another theatrical, folk-inflected, meaning-neutral Swiss idyll of a video installation, projected onto three gallery walls and accessorized with a Grimm Brothers gingerbread house and a bare tree branch hung with plastic objects that make interesting shadows. Three smaller works in back suggest that Rist's intense and idiosyncratic devotion to craft works best when you're forced to view it up close. Through Oct. 23. (Luhring Augustine, 531 W. 24th St. 212-206-9100.)

JANE AND LOUISE WILSON
A five-screen video installation of women exercising is based on photographs taken in New Zealand in 1910. Through Nov. 6. (303 Gallery, 525 W. 22nd St. 212-255-1121.)

Short List

ALLAN MC COLLUM
Petzel, 535 W. 22nd St.
212-680-9467. Through Oct. 1.

DANA SCHULTZ / AMY SILLMAN / KARA WALKER
Sikkema, 530 W. 22nd St.
212-929-2262. Through Oct. 2.

SIMONE SHUBUCK / PHOEBE WASHBURN
LFL, 530 W. 24th St.
212-989-7700. Through Oct. 2.

GALLERIES—BROOKLYN

DEWITT GODFREY
The sculptor wraps strips of Corten steel into circles of various sizes, then bolts them together into a highly permeable wall you can walk through or sit inside. The construction gives steel the friendliness of Jell-O, a sleight of hand reminiscent of Joel Shapiro's improbable ability to make a few wood posts look like a ballerina. The gallery has two examples, a dark rust wall inside and another slowly oxidizing to bright orange in the courtyard. Through Oct. 18; the outdoor sculpture will remain through Nov. 29. (Black & White, 483 Driggs Ave. 718-599-8775.)

GEORGE JENNE
A prop designer by day, an artist by night, Jenne applies his impressive fabrication skills to a series of three installations notable for their warped scale and wit. Through Oct. 7. (Valley Forge, 653 Metropolitan Ave. 917-803-3346.)

"BROOKLYN GRAVITY RACERS"
Pierogi gallery, a pacesetter of the Williamsburg art scene, celebrates its ten-year anniversary with a soapbox-derby-style extravaganza. Artists and citizens have been invited to decorate, deform, and otherwise soup up pinewood toy-car kits. Wild vehicular experiments abound—a carved Prada shoe, a jester's cap in orange and blue plasticine, a disturbingly accurate rat. Of course, there are plenty of speedsters, roadsters, and jalopies, too. Cars are on display now; races begin Oct. 6, with trophies for the fastest and the most inventive. Through Oct. 10. (177 N. 9th St. 718-599-2144.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

LYNN DAVIS
Davis, who is best known for her refined, large-scale, black-and-white photographs of icebergs, pyramids, and monuments toned with selenium and gold, has gone in a new direction for this show. She used color film and made forty-inch-square ink-jet prints that she manipulated digitally, using both positive and negative images in a palette that ranges from deep black through several tones of blue and into gray. The photographs mainly have to do with space exploration, including views of an abandoned launch site in Kazakhstan, a platform at the Kennedy Space Center, in Florida, and an actual satellite launch in French Guiana. The architecture of the blueish scaffolding, cranes, towers, walkways, and girders is rendered formally, and could be intimidatingly cold, but the way the ink falls on the fine German watercolor paper makes the surface of the prints strangely soft and painterly. Through Oct. 30. (Houk, 745 Fifth Ave. 212-750-7070.)

TODD HIDO
Moody color prints of desolate American landscapes, taken with long exposure times from behind the windshield of a car. Many of the photographs were made just after a rainstorm, when the windshield was still wet or streaked, which gives them a blurred or, in one case, a "distressed" look, almost as if the Starn twins had been working on it. Telephone poles lean precariously over muddy fields, snow-covered roads twist off to the edge of the frame, and leafless trees stand alone in the mist. The prints range in size from eleven by fourteen to thirty-eight by forty-eight inches, and are austerely beautiful. Through Oct. 16. (Saul, 535 W. 22nd St. 212-627-2410.)

JUSTINE KURLAND
Large color prints of forests with charred trees hang with a photograph of pregnant hippies sitting around a campfire in the nude and other woodland scenes. They are accompanied by black-and-white portraits of people in various medieval getups: "knights" in jousting gear pose with their horses or stand alone in their chain mail, looking affectless. Kurland's juxtaposition of the bellicose portraits and the pacific hippie settings might be interpreted as an antiwar message. Through Oct. 9. (Gorney Bravin + Lee, 534 W. 26th St. 212-352-8372.)

AN-MY LÊ
Black-and-white photographs of scrubby hills pounded by mortar fire, U.S. Marines scanning the horizon, convoys of Humvees snaking along dusty trails, soldiers bivouacking among their jeeps in the desert. Could be Iraq or Afghanistan, but it's just Twenty-Nine Palms, California, where the Marines train to go to more dangerous places. There's a conceptual disconnect here. Lê is a Vietnamese immigrant who arrived in the United States in 1975 with her family at another Marine base in California, Camp Pendleton. In an earlier project, she photographed reënactments of episodes in the war in Vietnam. Through Oct. 23. (Murray Guy, 453 W. 17th St. 212-463-7372.)

Short List

GILLIAN LAUB
Benrubi, 52 E. 76th St. 212-517-3766.
Through Oct. 9.

ALESSANDRA SANGUINETTI
Milo, 552 W. 24th St. 212-414-0370.
Through Oct. 23.

SHOMEI TOMATSU
Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St. 212-832-1155.
Through Jan. 2.

ALEX WEBB
Ricco/Maresca, 529 W. 20th St. 212-627-4819.
Through Oct. 30.

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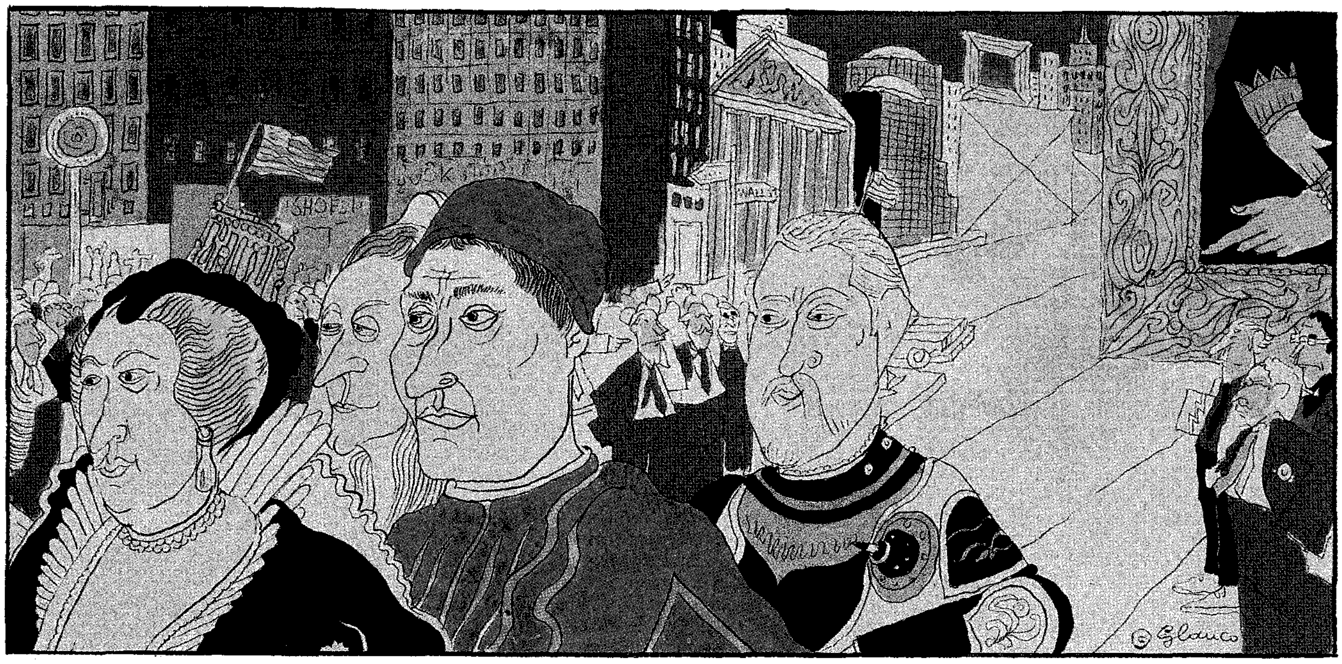
Pace/MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. 212-759-7999. Through Oct. 16.

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

SOTHEBY'S
Sept. 30 at 10:15 A.M.: This auction of French and Continental furniture and artifacts ranges from the austere and sacred to the opulent and secular. Among the early lots, a medieval Byzantine bas-relief depicts a man on horseback poised above a Greek cross; the style is clean, iconic, and monumental. Later lots are highly decorative, such as a tapestry (produced circa 1700, most likely by the Reydams workshop in Brussels) in which images of flora and fauna are woven into a dense thicket of naturalistic abstraction. The rare eighteenth-century Berlin tapestry "The Audience of the Prince," withdrawn from an April sale, is also being offered. (York Ave. at 72nd St. 212-606-7000.)



"The Medici on Wall Street," an exhibit of portraits from the Uffizi, at Federal Hall National Monument starting Oct. 1.

GLAUCO DELLA SCIUCCA

CHRISTIE'S
Sep. 29 at 10 A.M.: Permutations of the urban landscape are highlighted in a sale of Impressionist and modern art. The skyscrapers in George Grosz's gritty "Blue Sky No. 3" leave very little of the eponymous firmament on view; the space is freer down below, as in the vast thoroughfares of Jean Dufy's "Place de l'Opéra et Rue de la Paix." ♦ Sept. 29 at 2 and Sept. 30 at 10 A.M. and 2: On the second day of this two-day sale of wine, Christie's will begin to auction more than fifteen thousand bottles from the cellar of the Hermitage Inn, an oenophile Mecca situated on Mount Haystack in Vermont. Among them is the largest collection of Château de Beaucastel ever sold by the house, featuring seven vintages of the very rare Hommage à Jacques Perrin. ♦ Oct. 1 at 10 A.M. and 2: An auction of antique and modern glass paperweights, including a hollow white-rose-and-bud French weight attributed to Saint Louis, from the mid-nineteenth century, and a Delmo Tarsitano insect-and-flower glass sculpture from the "Earth Life" series. ♦ Oct. 4 at 2: The first day of the three-day "House Sale," a monthly auction of furniture, art works, and decorative objects at moderate prices, features the remainder of the Hermitage wines, sold without reserve. (20 Rockefeller Plaza, at 49th St. 212-636-2000.)

DOYLE
Sept. 29 at 10 A.M.: "Belle Époque," an occasional auction of decorative art from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. (175 E. 87th St. 212-427-2730.)

SWANN
Sept. 30 at 2: Lilliputians torment their gargantuan Gulliver, Alice confronts the hookah-smoking caterpillar, and Piglet and Pooh tread a path near the Hundred Acre Wood in some of the many enchanting illustrations in this auction of fine books, prints, and letters. Highlights include a one-of-a-kind storyboard for "Where the Wild Things Are," correspondence between modern American artists and the Whitney Museum's Lloyd Goodrich, and a catalogue—signed and doodled on by Picasso—for an exhibition of "Guernica." (104 E. 25th St. 212-254-4710.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC

OPERA

METROPOLITAN OPERA
Sept. 29 at 6:30: **"Die Walküre,"** part of the Met's sold-out "Ring" cycle of the spring, returns as a solo offering with a new conductor, Valery Gergiev; the cast includes Olga Sergeeva (as Brünnhilde), Margaret Jane Wray (as Sieglinde), Yvonne Naef, Plácido Domingo, Vladimir Vaneev, and Stephen Milling. ♦ Oct. 2 at 12:30 and Oct. 5 at 6:30: With Adrianne Pieczonka replacing Wray. ♦ Sept. 30 at 8: Giancarlo del Monaco's production of **"Madama Butterfly"** returns, with Kallen Esperian, Maria Zifchak, Roberto Aronica, and Vassily Gerello in the leading roles; Emmanuel Villaume, an elegant interpreter of Mediterranean repertory, conducts. ♦ Oct. 1 and Oct. 4 at 8: Ben Heppner sings the title role of **"Otello."** Barbara Frittoli is his Desdemona, with Carlo Guelfi singing Iago; James Levine. ♦ Oct. 2 at 8: Levine comes back to conduct **"Carmen,"** with the magnificent Olga Borodina in the leading role, Neil Shicoff singing Don José, Hei-Kyung Hong as Micaëla, and Ildar Abdrazakov as Escamillo. (Metropolitan Opera House. 212-362-6000.)

NEW YORK CITY OPERA
Sept. 29 and Oct. 5 at 7:30 and Oct. 1 at 8: **"La Rondine,"** Puccini's sole operetta, includes the beloved aria "Chi il bel sogno di Doretta." Pamela Armstrong, Angela Turner Wilson, Gerard Powers, and Tracey Welborn lead the cast, in Lotfi Mansouri's Second Empire production; Stephen Lord conducts. ♦ Sept. 30 at 7:30 and Oct. 3 at 1:30: Strauss's **"Daphne"**—a rapturously beautiful "bucolic tragedy" written under the shadow of Nazism—has come to New York at last, and Paul Kellogg's intrepid company deserves praise for having the courage to mount a work that tests its limits. The singing of Elizabeth Futral, who offers a radiant account of the high-flying title role, is the most memorable aspect of the evening. Stephen Lawless's staging flirts with Brown Shirt costumes and Leni Riefenstahl-like imagery but is relatively constrained. Also with Ursula Ferri, Roger Honeywell, and Robert Chafin; the City Opera Orchestra, conducted by George Manahan, does itself proud. ♦ Oct. 2 at 1:30: Mark Morris's popular production of **"Platée,"** Jean-Philippe Rameau's 1745 satiric opera, returns to City Opera. The sprightly score and the odd story—in which Jupiter teases his jealous wife, Juno, by pretending to woo the froggy marsh nymph of the title—are helped along by Morris's fidelity to the music and irreverence toward everything else. Gods, Graces, and sundry swamp dwellers keep the jokes coming, and Isaac Mizrahi supplies the witty costumes. The impressive cast includes Christine Brandes, Lisa Saffer, and Jean-Paul Fouchécourt; Daniel Beckwith. ♦ Oct. 2 at 8: **"La Bohème,"** with Angela Marambio, Julianne Borg, Jorge Antonio Pita, and Grant Youngblood; Steven White. (New York State Theatre. 212-870-5570.)

"BUWALSKY, A ROAD OPERA"
Nine Circles Chamber Theatre, a company that devotes itself to music-theatre works with texts by Jonathan Levi, presents his "soap-opera thriller," in which the world's most unattractive man pursues the world's most desirable woman, with music by Mel Marvin. Corina van Eijk directs a production by her Dutch company, Opera Spanga, that combines film and live performance. (Skirball Center, New York University. 212-992-8484. Sept. 30 and Oct. 1-2 at 8 and Oct. 3 at 7.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC
For years, people thought of Augusta Read Thomas as an industrious, respectable modernist. That all changed in the course of her tenure as the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's composer-in-residence, during which she has produced vividly colored scores that have the energy and daring of the best new modern architecture. Her latest is "Gathering Paradise: Emily Dickinson Settings for Soprano and Orchestra," a Philharmonic commission, which will feature the gleaming soprano voice of Heidi Grant Murphy. Lorin Maazel conducts a program that should bring in the crowds along with the connoisseurs: it also includes Bartók's "Miraculous Mandarin" Suite and Tchaikovsky's

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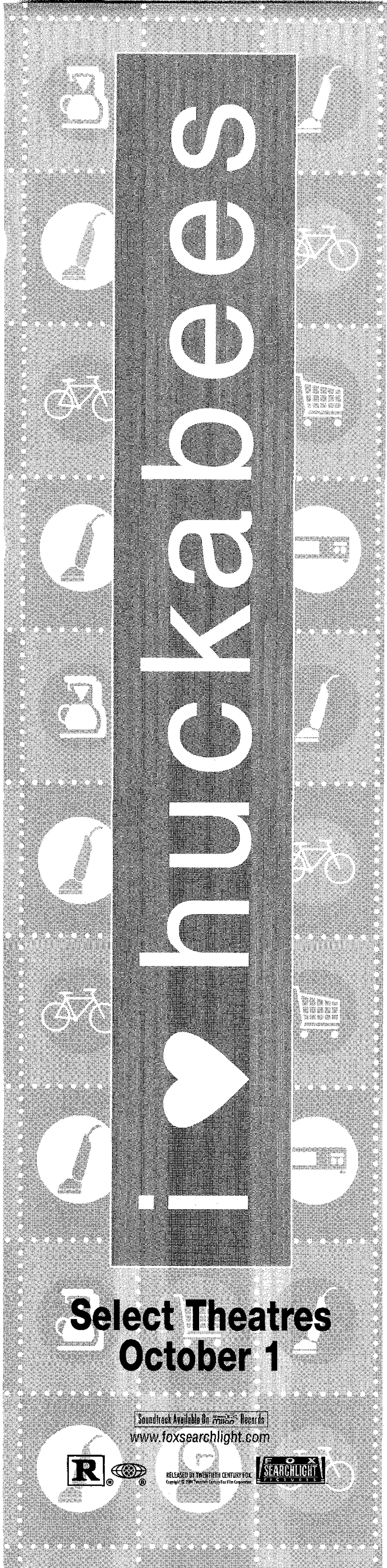
i ♥ huckabees

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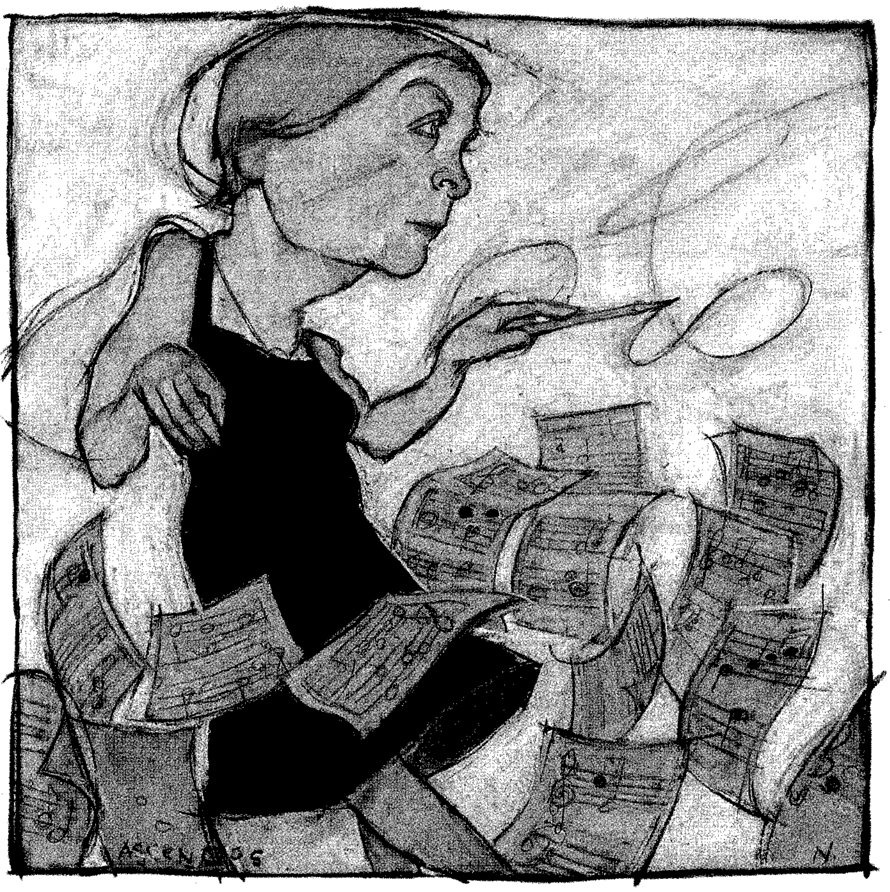
First Piano Concerto (with the ever-combustible Lang Lang). (Avery Fisher Hall. 212-875-5656. Sept. 29-30 and Oct. 5 at 7:30, Oct. 1 at 2, and Oct. 2 at 8.)

JUILLIARD ORCHESTRA
"Manhattan Roll," a manic overture by the Juilliard faculty composer Robert Beaser, opens a program that includes music by Prokofiev (the Suites Nos. 1 and 2 from "Cinderella") and Mozart (the Sinfonia Concertante in E-Flat Major, K. 364); James DePreist conducts. (Juilliard Theatre, 155 W. 65th St. Sept. 30 at 8. For free tickets, which are required, call 212-769-7406.)

EARLY MUSIC NEW YORK
Frederick Renz conducts two Handel blockbusters, "The Water Musick" and "The Musick for the Royal Fireworks." (Church of St. Ignatius Loyola, Park Ave. at 84th St. 212-280-0330. Oct. 2 at 8.) (See This Week.)



The New York Philharmonic offers the world-première performances of Augusta Read Thomas's "Gathering Paradise," beginning September 29.

N. ASCENCIOS

RECITALS

TAKA KIGAWA
The pianist, an acclaimed advocate for the most challenging contemporary works, plays Stravinsky's "Three Pieces from 'Petrushka' " and Webern's Variations, Op. 27, along with the complete Études of their predecessor Debussy. (Renee Weiler Concert Hall, 46 Barrow St. Sept. 29 at 8. Tickets at the door.)

NEW YORK EARLY MUSIC CELEBRATION
Ten days of concerts, lectures, and other events. Here are some highlights. Oct. 1 at 6:30: Relic, a soprano and Spanish double-harp duo, kicks off the festival with a recital at the Hispanic Society of America; their program consists of works drawn from the Society's collection of rare manuscripts. (Broadway at 155th St.) ♦ Oct. 1 at 8: The all-male vocal group Lionheart sings "My Fayre Ladye," a collection of songs and chants from Tudor England. (Church of St. Ignatius of Antioch, West End Ave. at 87th St.) ♦ Oct. 3 at 4: Pomerium, Alexander Blachly's renowned mixed choir, sings "Chapel Music from Renaissance Spain," a concert of works by Ockeghem, Victoria, and others. (Corpus Christi Church, 529 W. 121st St.) ♦ Oct. 3 at 5: The Mozartean Players (including the pianist Stephen Lubin) play music from the Classical and early-Romantic eras with exceptional eloquence and subtlety. They offer piano trios by Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven (in G Major, Op. 1, No. 2) at the Frick Collection. (1 E. 70th St. Remaining free tickets will be distributed at the door.) ♦ Oct. 5 at 8: The harpsichordist Bradley Brookshire plays a bushel of Bach fugues (including the "Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue") in a free multimedia concert in which passages from Bach's scores, complete with a CNN-style crawl offering musical analysis, are projected above him. (Elebash Recital Hall, CUNY Graduate Center, Fifth Ave. at 35th St.) (212-280-0330. For a complete schedule, see www.nyemc.org.)

BEAUX ARTS TRIO
Offering all of Beethoven's violin and cello sonatas along with the complete piano trios is hardly an act of innovative programming, but it does allow for one-stop shopping with three extraordinary musicians who know this music cold. The first in a series of concerts offers the Sonata for Violin and Piano in A Minor, Op. 23, the Sonata for Cello and Piano in A Major, Op. 69, and the Trio in D Major, Op. 71, No. 1 ("Ghost"). (Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 212-570-3949. Oct. 1 at 8.)

BARGEMUSIC
Oct. 2 at 7:30 and Oct. 3 at 4: A cross-generational concert that brings together the violinists Mark Peskanov and Timothy Fain, the pianist Steven Beck, and other musicians for performances of works by Schubert, Strauss (the rare Piano Quartet, Op. 13), and Shostakovich (the Piano Quintet). (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-2083. For a full schedule, see www.bargemusic.org.)

MORITZBURG FESTIVAL CONCERT
In what's becoming an annual thing, the cellist Jan Vogler (along with such distinguished friends as the pianist Olli Mustonen and the violist Cynthia Phelps) brings a taste of his German chamber-music festival to New York audiences. This concert combines favorites by Mozart, Shostakovich (the Piano Quintet), and Brahms (the String Sextet in G Major) with a new work by Mustonen ("Toccata"). (Weill Recital Hall, Carnegie Hall. 212-247-7800. Oct. 3 at 2.)

OUT OF TOWN

TANNERY POND CONCERTS
The photographer Christian Steiner's series wraps up the summer season, a little on the late side, with an early-evening program from the Lark Quartet and the clarinettist Todd Palmer, who perform music by Beethoven (the "Harp" Quartet), Weber (the Clarinet Quintet), and Ravel. (Darrow School, Route 20, New Lebanon, N.Y. 888-820-1696. Oct. 2 at 6.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

HARLEM RIVER FESTIVAL
The New York Restoration Project, a nonprofit organization devoted to open space and waterfront access, marks a belated National Estuaries Day with boat rides, music, a nature walk, and oyster-gardening demonstrations. (Swindler Cove Park, Dyckman St. at the Harlem River Drive. For more information, call 212-333-2552. Oct. 2 from 9 to 4.)

"CREATIVITY NOW"
Tokion, a music, fashion, and technology magazine, presents its second annual conference on the state of the downtown arts scene. The record producer Brian Eno, the photographer Nan Goldin, and the punk artist Raymond Pettibon are among the two dozen artists who will share their perspectives. (Great Hall, Cooper Union, Third Ave. at 7th St. For more information, call 212-358-9965, ext. 2, or visit www.tokion.com. Oct. 2-3 from noon to six.)

"KNIT-OUT & CROCHET 2004"
The latest yarns, patterns, and accessories will be on display at this annual outdoor gathering of knitting fans. The afternoon includes a scarf contest, fashion shows (for people and for dogs), and "Yarn Doctors," who can answer any needling questions. (Union Square Park, Broadway at 17th St. For more information, visit www.knit-out.com. Oct. 3 at noon.)

READINGS
Sept. 29 at 7: Jonathan Safran Foer, Mary Gordon, Lewis Lapham, Walter Mosley, Katha Pollitt, and many other writers gather for "In Defense of Democracy," a reading to benefit the political-action committee Move On. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 212-864-5400.) ♦ Oct. 4 at 8: Louis Begley, Jeremy Dauber, Tovah Feldshuh, and others celebrate the centennial of Isaac Bashevis Singer. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 212-415-5500.)

TALKS
Sept. 29 at 6: Daniel Birnbaum, Thomas Crow, Thelma Golden, Rachel Harrison, and other critics, curators, and artists consider the legacy of Pop art. Jack Bankowsky, who edited *Artforum's* current issue on the subject, is the moderator. (Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St. For more information, call 212-475-4000.) ♦ Sept. 29 at 6: The New York County Lawyers' Association's Cyberspace Law Committee presents a discussion about vote-counting technology and democracy, with Adam Cohen, a member of the *Times* Editorial Board, Rebecca Mercuri, a computer expert, Douglas A. Kellner, the commissioner of the New York City Board of Elections, and other lawyers and authors. (NYCLA Home of Law, 14 Vesey St. For more information, call 212-267-6646.) ♦ Oct. 4 at 6:30: Robin Bell, of Columbia University's Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory, shares some of what she learned studying Lake Vostok, an ancient body of water that's two miles below the Antarctic ice. (The Explorers Club, 46 E. 70th St. 212-628-8383.)

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MOVIES OPENING

DEADLINE
A documentary about the decision by George Ryan, as governor of Illinois, to commute the sentence of a hundred and sixty-seven death-row inmates. Directed by Katy Chevigny and Kirsten Johnson. Opening Oct. 1. (Quad Cinema.)

DIG!
For her documentary about the indie-rock scene, Ondi Timoner spent seven years shooting footage of Anton Newcombe, the lead singer of the Brian Jonestown Massacre. Opening Oct. 1.

GOING UPRIVER: THE LONG WAR OF JOHN KERRY
George Butler ("Pumping Iron") directed this documentary about Kerry's service in Vietnam and his subsequent political career. Opening Oct. 1.

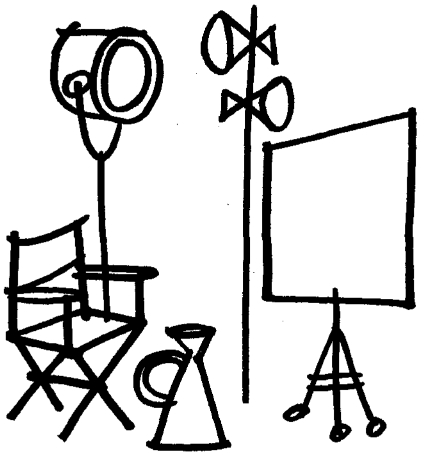
I ♥ HUCKABEES
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening Oct. 1.

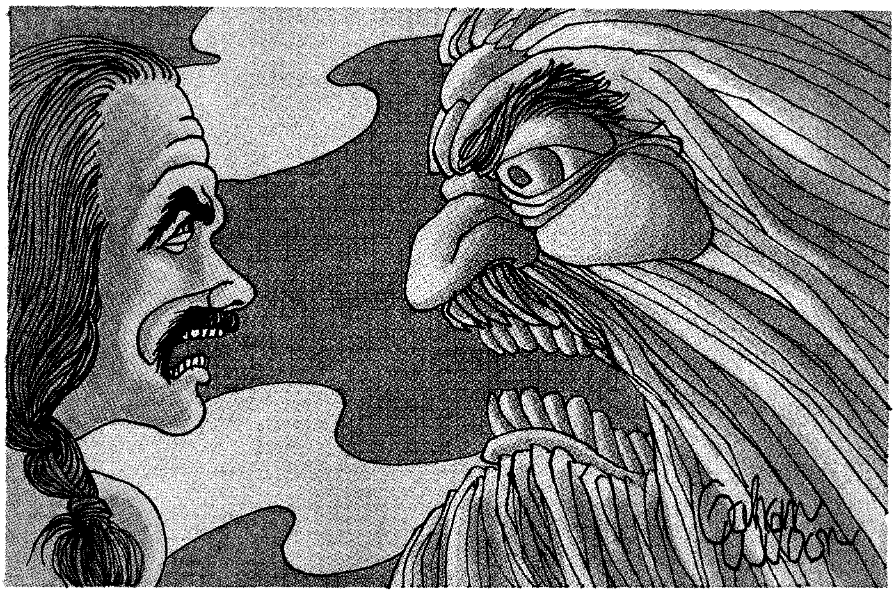
LADDER 49
The bond between a rookie Baltimore fireman (Joaquin Phoenix) and his chief (John Travolta) is tested during a deadly blaze, in a drama directed by Jay Russell. Opening Oct. 1.

SHARK TALE
An animated movie from Dreamworks in which a bumbling fish (Will Smith) swims afoul of the shark Mafia. The voice cast includes Robert De Niro and Renée Zellweger. Opening Oct. 1.

TYING THE KNOT
Jim de Sève's documentary looks at the relationships of two gay couples and the larger debate over same-sex marriage. Opening Oct. 1.

WOMAN, THOU ART LOOSED
Bishop T. D. Jakes, the Texas-based minister, plays himself in this drama about a troubled woman's attempt to reform her life. Opening Oct. 1.





At BAM Rose Cinemas, Sean Connery in John Boorman's 1974 film, "Zardoz."

GAHAN WILSON

FILM NOTES

THE BROWN BUNNY
Another enraging, provocative, solipsistic movie from Vincent Gallo, the longtime New York artist, model, photographer, painter, filmmaker, and general pain in the neck. After losing a motorcycle race in New Hampshire, Bud (Gallo) loads his Honda RS 250 into a black van and begins a cross-country trek home to Los Angeles, where he plans to hook up with his girlfriend (Chloë Sevigny). Much of the movie plays in silence, or near silence, as Bud—a romantic loner unconsciously passing across heroic American landscapes—journeys through plains, mountains, and sunset-red skies. The camera is perched over Bud's shoulder as he drives, and we see, through the front window, the road markers endlessly approaching and disappearing, the landscapes falling away—the bluesy trancelike visions, half monotonous, half mesmerizing, of an insomniac driving beyond need or reason. The movie ends with the notorious scene of Sevigny fellating Gallo, which, for the record, is too oddly framed and distanced to be considered pornographic. In its surly way, the movie casts a spell; the last scene, retroactively, pulls the meanings together. With Cheryl Tiegs as a disconsolate, wordless beauty sitting at a roadside rest stop.—*David Denby* (Reviewed in our issue of 9/13/04.) (Cinema Village.)

CELLULAR
A decent Hollywood thriller, lacking any sense, but entertaining just the same. The veteran screenwriter Larry Cohen, who wrote "Phone Booth," uses the same communication-breakdown gimmick here: a kidnapped woman (Kim Basinger) finds a phone and dials a random number, reaching a mellow surfer (Chris Evans) who becomes hellbent on saving her. The director, David R. Ellis, has fun juggling the two characters (he styles their scenes so that they seem to be in different films), and a cool tension develops between Evans's brightly lit outside world and Basinger's tremulous inside one.—*Bruce Diones* (Battery Park 11, Cinema 2, East 86th Street Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, 19th Street East 6, 34th Street Theatre, and Village East Cinemas.)

EL CID
In this gorgeous 1961 spectacle, Charlton Heston persuasively embodies the medieval champion as if he were a liberal Kennedy-era Cold Warrior, defending his Spanish homeland against fanatic Moors while displaying his decency and openmindedness by enlisting a friendly Moor as his ally. (Heston even strikes a monumental spark or two with his true love, played by Sophia Loren.) The director, Anthony Mann, and his peerless cinematographer, Robert Krasker, know how to use the wide screen to capture the span and tingle of court pageantry, jousting, and pitched warfare. Their scenes of single-warrior combat brought new levels of physical exertion and emotional realism to the cinematic depiction of broadsword swashbuckling. Much of the credit should go to the legendary second-unit director Yakima Canutt. The secret weapon of Mann's period epics, Canutt had a primal instinct for staging thrilling horse charges or bouts with lance and mace and positioning them for maximum Super Technirama 70 oomph.—*Michael Sragow* (Moving Image; Oct. 2-3.)

GARDEN STATE
Andrew Largeman (Zach Braff), a struggling actor, arrives in his native New Jersey with some extra baggage: his paraplegic mother has possibly committed suicide, he's been on Zoloft since forever, and his one major acting credit is as a retarded quarterback. This would be a difficult burden for any young man, let alone a début movie. But Braff, who also wrote and directed, keeps the tone light with some funny homecoming scenes. There's a party where Large is greeted as "Jersey's De Niro," a run-in with a high-school friend turned cop, and, like a winning bass line, the smirking wit of his slacker friend Mark (Peter Sarsgaard). The movie is also lifted by the presence of Natalie Portman, perhaps the ultimate ethereal home-town girl. Although Braff eventually takes the movie to emotional places where only the extremely tenderhearted will follow, there are a lot of resonant moments and a moody, introspective soundtrack.—*Michael Agger* (Battery Park 11, Chelsea Cinemas, Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.)

HERO
The Chinese director Zhang Yimou, having previously worked on a restrained scale, decides to go symphonic. Hence the broad thrusts of this movie, which is set two thousand years ago and is designed to show that, at a time when other modern civilizations were still mud-bound, China was putting the final touches on the process of governing by martial arts. The pitiless leader of the Qin kingdom welcomes a young official (Jet Li) who has allegedly killed off three notable assassins, thus insuring peace in the land. His story does not ring true, and we are duly led through a variety of competing versions, each of them shot in different colors, under different skies. The result is not so much a historical epic as a kind of highly determined ballet: dreamy with bloodless violence, relying less on shades of character than on magnificence of gesture, and closer to the Michael Powell of "The Red Shoes" or "Tales of Hoffmann," say, than to the strivings of David Lean. With the unflappable Maggie Cheung. Cinematography by Christopher Doyle. In Mandarin.—*Anthony Lane* (9/6/04) (Battery Park 11, Chelsea Cinemas, East 86th Street Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, New York Twin, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.)

INCIDENT AT LOCH NESS
Less a mock-documentary than a mock-turtle soup of a documentary. The cinematographer John Bailey is shooting a portrait of Werner Herzog, the soulful, disaster-prone German director, at the same time that Herzog and Zak Penn, a crass American screenwriter-producer, go off to Loch Ness to make a film about our spiritual need for monsters. Once at the loch, it appears that Penn, the producer of the "film," is surreptitiously trying to surround Herzog's vague artistic yearnings with the elements of a commercial movie, such as a *Playboy* model operating the sonar. At that point, both crews run into the actual monster, Nessie

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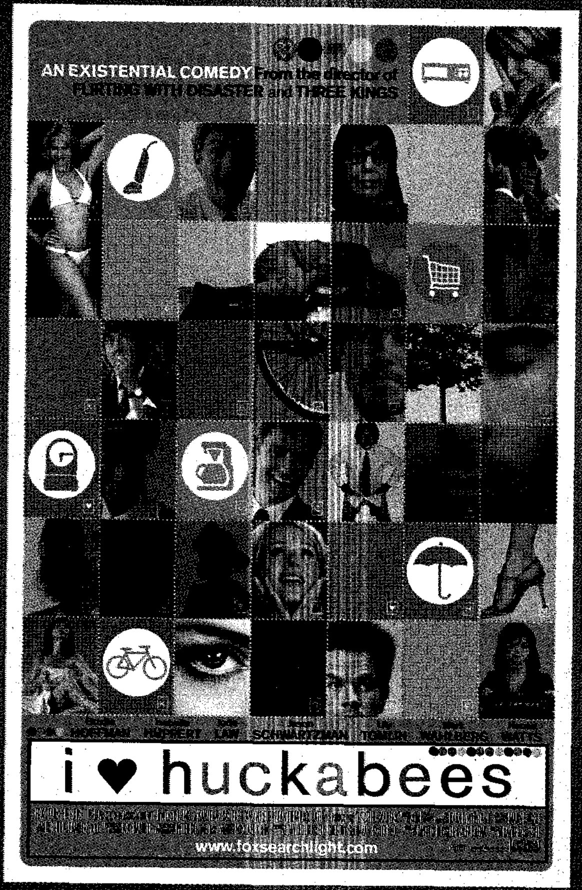
PRESENTS

INSPIRED VISIONS

BOMBAY SAPPHIRE has a recipe for a perfect night at the movies: mix five parts inspiration with one part innovation and add a generous dash of passion. And the one place where all these ingredients come together is independent film. With fresh perspectives and a personal touch, today's up-and-coming filmmakers are bringing new excitement to the screen.

Now **BOMBAY SAPPHIRE** has partnered with Fox Searchlight Pictures to celebrate the release of *I ❤ Huckabees*, the new existential comedy directed and co-written by David O. Russell (Flirting with Disaster, Three Kings). The film marks co-writer Jeff Baena's first feature film screenplay put into production. Truly an inspired debut.


AN EXISTENTIAL COMEDY From the director of FLIRTING WITH DISASTER and THREE KINGS
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Albert Markovski (Jason Schwartzman), head of the Open Spaces Coalition, has been experiencing an alarming series of coincidences the meaning of which escapes him. With the help of two Existential Detectives, Bernard and Vivian Jaffe (Dustin Hoffman and Lily Tomlin), Albert examines his life, his relationships, and his conflict with Brad Stand (Jude Law), an executive climbing the corporate ladder at Huckabees, a popular chain of retail superstores. When Brad also hires the detectives, they dig deep into his seemingly perfect life and his relationship with his spokesmodel girlfriend, the voice of Huckabees, Dawn Campbell (Naomi Watts). Under the guidance of the Jaffes' nemesis, the French radical Caterine Vauban (Isabelle Huppert), Albert pairs up with rebel firefighter Tommy Corn (Mark Wahlberg) to take matters into their own hands.

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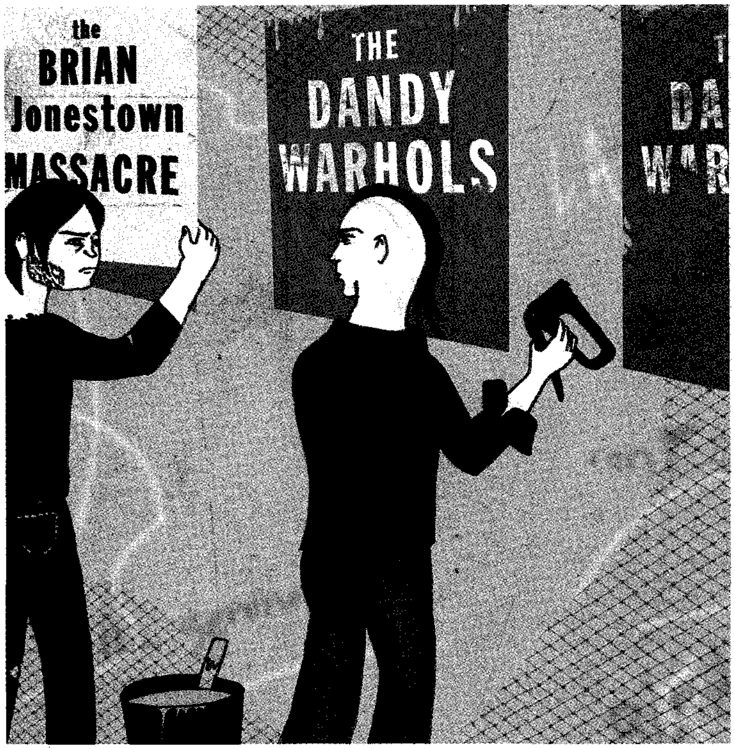
herself—huge, slimy, and nasty—who attacks their boat. Or so it seems. The entire thing is actually an elaborate and convoluted put-on that allegedly raises serious questions about fact versus truth, but in reality the movie offers neither. As the fictional Penn-Herzog project heads into disaster, there are a few laughs, but most of the time we watch as Penn, unattractive and sneering, plays the heavy while the poor, distracted Herzog methodically exploits and destroys his reputation.—*D.D.* (Sunshine Cinema.)

INFERNAL AFFAIRS

Some viewers have found themselves challenged by the intricate plot of this film, but anybody used to disentangling an entire bowl of noodles should have no problem. What we have is a little mole-on-mole action, revolving around a couple of Hong Kong cops (Tony Leung and Andy Lau). One works undercover, reporting from the entourage of a drug lord (Eric Tsang). The other works openly for the police department, but secretly as a snitch for the same villain. Neither policeman knows what the other looks like, and it takes a flurry of nervous pursuits and rooftop encounters before the scales fall from their eyes. The movie presents itself as a stack of character studies, but the leads are constructed from layers of impassive cool, and the roles for women—a shrink, an old flame—are comically fleeting. What makes the picture work is its unflagging devotion to the play of gleam and shadow: to a vision of Hong Kong as a natural hotbed of treason and double cross. For those who need a fix of further confusion, two sequels are ready and waiting in the wings. With Anthony Wong as the police chief, who suffers an amazing fall from grace. In Cantonese.—*A.L.* (9/20/04) (Angelika Film Center, Empire 25, Lincoln Square, and New York Twin.)



Opening October 1, "Dig!," a documentary by Ondi Timoner.

CHRISTOPHER NEAL

MARIA FULL OF GRACE

In this superbly poised independent film, Maria (Catalina Sandino Moreno), a willful seventeen-year-old, unhappily pregnant and stuck in a factory job, agrees to serve as a "mule," carrying in her stomach little pellets of heroin from her native Colombia to New Jersey. Joshua Marston, a thirty-five-year-old N.Y.U. film-school graduate, nosed around Colombia and New York's immigrant neighborhoods before beginning to shoot "Maria," his first full-length feature, and the way he dramatized the material seems instinctively right: he goes step by step, detail by detail, emotion by emotion, eliding nothing, exaggerating nothing. In his calm and lucid way, Marston has made one of the emblematic coming-to-America stories of our time.—*D.D.* (7/26/04) (Chelsea Cinemas, Empire 25, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, 64th and 2nd, Sunshine Cinema, and Sutton 1 and 2.)

MR. 3000

Years in development, this fuzzy baseball story about a conceited player (Bernie Mac) who comes out of retirement to fix his record (he's three hits short of the magic three thousand) is a major letdown. Mac, in his first Hollywood lead, doesn't display his usual edge—he gives a neat, love-me performance. It's a shame, because there's a nasty, clever film about baseball hidden underneath the movie's gauzy camaraderie. With a large and able cast (Angela Bassett, Chris Noth, and Paul Sorvino, among others) who have been left stranded.—*B.D.* (Battery Park 11, East 86th Street Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, 19th Street East 6, 34th Street Theatre, and Village Theatre VII.)

THE MOTORCYCLE DIARIES

In 1952, a medical student called Ernesto Guevara de la Serna (Gael García Bernal) teamed up with his friend Alberto Granado (Rodrigo de la Serna), a biochemist, and journeyed eight thousand miles through South America. The tale of their travels is the basis for Walter Salles's ravishing, suggestive, and faintly superfluous film. Both young men are of middle-class Argentinean stock, and Ernesto has a girlfriend so rich and beautiful that her family's estate, as Alberto notes, looks like Switzerland. If he had stayed with her, Latin-American history might have taken a more placid turn; instead, Ernesto remounted his motorbike, headed into the Andes, and began the determined process of turning into Che Guevara. The film is sprinkled with gestures toward that future, especially when the two men work at a leper colony on the Amazon, but foreshadowing doesn't always convince; the sequence in which they meet a pair of wandering Communists on the road and drink in the saga of their suffering is biographically accurate, yet it feels dramatically forced. In the end, the film might best be read as a high-class, episodic buddy picture, with the tubby, more skeptical Alberto (he's like a young Robert Donat) observing with interest the spark of indignation—and the air of chaste reticence—in his impossibly handsome pal.—*A.L.* (9/27/04) (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Sunshine Cinema.)

SHAUN OF THE DEAD

It is only natural to be scared of zombies, and to prevent them from laying waste to your home. A more relaxing approach, however, is to be bored and vaguely annoyed by them, or, better still, not to notice them in the first place. This is the premise of Edgar Wright's British comedy, which may be responsible for kicking off a new and specialized genre of slacker horror. Shaun (Simon Pegg) lives a supremely uneventful life, which revolves around his girlfriend (Kate Ashfield), his mother (Penelope Wilton), and, above all, his local pub. This gentle routine is threatened when the dead return to life and make strenuous attempts to snack on ordinary Londoners. The finale, in which the pub turns into an Alamo, is the bloodiest, most orthodox, and least witty part of the movie; far sharper are the early scenes in which Shaun wanders happily to the local store along a battered, zombie-dotted street and pulps his attackers with a cricket bat. The central joke is so snappy and well sustained that you barely catch sight of the ominous vision on offer: a country that already feels like death.—*A.L.* (9/27/04) (Battery Park 11, Chelsea West, 84th Street Sixplex, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.)

SILVER CITY

Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (BAM Rose Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, and Village Theatre VII.)

SKY CAPTAIN AND THE WORLD OF TOMORROW

At first, it might seem curious that the writer-director Kerry Conran chose to use his digital wizardry to re-create the look of Fritz Lang's "Metropolis" and other Expressionist films, but the nineteen-twenties were a time when the language of film was in a fluid, experimental stage, as directors refined their use of montage, transparency, and camera effects. Now, with the increased realism of computer-generated images, directors like Conran seem propelled by a new sense of possibility about what can be accomplished onscreen. In any event, "Sky Captain" is an impressive technical achievement, seamlessly integrating A-list actors into an imaginary world—only, at times, one wishes that this world weren't so dark (literally). Would Conran's computer renderings seem fake in full daylight, or is his commitment to noir just a shade too extreme? His dedication to the celluloid past, however, is beyond question—among the plentiful homages, the immortal Laurence Olivier has a cameo from the crypt. The story is a pastiche of classic sci-fi adventures, with Jude Law as an aviator and Gwyneth Paltrow as a reporter on the trail of a doomsday cult. If the movie is powered more by its rousing, brassy score than by its emotional connections, the slack is taken up by the continuous revelation of Conran's visual inventions.—*M.A.* (Battery Park 11, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, 34th Street Theatre, and Village Theatre VII.)

THE TAKE

The director Avi Lewis and the writer Naomi Klein (the author of "No Logo") have done something extraordinary: they have dramatized the effects of the flight of capital. Spending several months in Argentina, the filmmakers befriended workers who were trying to reopen the automotive factory that used to employ them. The men, fallen members of Argentina's once robust middle class, shed tears as they see the ruin and decay of their former shop, and, with the help of a labor advocate, they begin the uphill process of wresting the factory from the absentee owners and running the business as a coöperative. Their soft-spoken leader, Freddy, makes a wonderfully unguarded subject for the camera, and the story also has a tanned, theatrical villain: the former President Carlos Menem, who is running for reëlection and who, in a former incarnation, privatized state-owned companies and linked the Argentinean peso to the U.S. dollar. (The results were disastrous.) One wishes that the filmmakers had taken the time to fully explain a crucial court decision, only because the workers in "The Take" are so admirable, displaying a melancholy eloquence and a genuine revolutionary spirit.—*M.A.* (Film Forum.)

VANITY FAIR

In the hands of the Indian-born director Mira Nair, Thackeray's story of social climbing and tumbling emerges as strong meat, sauced to the point of surfeit by the heat of human greed. Becky Sharp (Reese Witherspoon) hasn't got a penny to her name, or a saving speck of conscience, but she has everything else, and, thus equipped, she begins her climb: a spell in the bosom of the Sedley family, courtesy of her friend Amelia (Romola Garai); a grim sojourn in the moldering mansion of the Crawleys; marriage to the dashing Rawdon (James Purefoy), the romance of which soon falters for lack of funds; and, by way of a Faustian finale, the demonic embrace of Lord Steyne (Gabriel Byrne), for whom money has bought a living death. Nair packs the frame with detail, and she never misses a chance to remind us just how much of the wealth of the early nineteenth century was garnered abroad, at the cost of colonial blood and sweat; but this argument comes to flood the drama, until the tale of Becky herself is in danger of being swamped. The novel thrums with incident, like a reporter's notebook, but onscreen that sort of frenzy is too much; viewers like to know what, or whom, to root for, and without that knowledge they feel lost. With an apparently endless list of British actors, including Jim Broadbent, Bob Hoskins, Eileen Atkins, Geraldine McEwan, and (struggling with the slippery role of George Osborne) Jonathan Rhys Meyers.—*A.L.* (9/6/04) (Battery Park 11, Chelsea Cinemas, East 86th Street Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 72nd Street East, 34th Street Theatre, Village Theatre VII, and Ziegfeld.)

WE DON'T LIVE HERE ANYMORE
In this excellent adaptation of two Andre Dubus novellas from the nineteen-seventies, Laura Dern is a woman married to a mediocre college English teacher (Mark Ruffalo) in New England. When her husband begins an affair with her best friend (Naomi Watts), she takes revenge, with her husband's guilty help, by sleeping with her best friend's husband (Peter Krause). The movie is so beautifully made, and so strong emotionally, that the potentially dreary material is actually thrilling. The director, John Curran, lets the squalling marital fights between Ruffalo and Dern swell and crest without unnecessary emphasis. The entire production is precise, vibrant, and, for all its turmoil, extremely moving. Michael Convertino did the music, and Maryse Alberti did the lovely cinematography, which builds a canopy of nature over the characters, season by season, and lets us know that, unhappy or not, they will survive. The screenplay is by Larry Gross.—*D.D.* (8/30/04) (BAM Rose Cinemas and Sutton 1 and 2.)

WICKER PARK
The American remake of a French thriller that was a hit of sorts in 1996. It was set in Paris, and it starred, among others, Monica Bellucci. Following that example was never going to be easy, but did the result have to be quite so sluggish? Matthew (Josh Hartnett) is meant to be going to China in his capacity as an advertising executive, instead of which he stays behind in a freezing Chicago in his capacity as a total schmuck, vainly attempting to trace a former love (Diane Kruger). Needless to say, he finds himself duped by a loopy imposter (Rose Byrne), who takes the beloved's place. This is all hugely unconvincing, especially since the hero already has a fiancée (Jessica Paré) who seems a more alluring prospect than either of her replacements. The screenwriter Brandon Boyce and the director Paul McGuigan drag us through a forest of flashbacks, thus insuring that we never know exactly where we are in the history of Matthew's folly; Hartnett does his best, hampered only by a recurrent, grieving expression which suggests that somebody is standing beside the camera and blowing smoke in his eyes, very hard. With Matthew Lillard, who camps it up as a straight shoe salesman. And so the mysteries accrue.—*A.L.* (9/20/04) (34th Street Theatre and Union Square.)

WIMBLEDON
The fine actor Paul Bettany ("Master and Commander," "A Beautiful Mind") is done in by this witless romantic comedy, played out on England's most prestigious courts. A miscast Kirsten Dunst stumbles as the upcoming tennis star who inspires Bettany to radically improve his game, and the script, by a trio of screenwriters, is anything but agile. Tennis clichés (the overbearing father, the long-shot contender) abound, and the film's characters are as underdrawn as the film is overpopulated. Clearly designed to be another British ensemble hit, this film, directed by Richard Loncraine, finds the net.—*B.D.* (Battery Park 11, Beekman, Chelsea Cinemas, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, and Union Square.)

ZARDOZ
In John Boorman's bizarre shoestring epic, a literal godhead named Zardoz soars forth from the élite utopian enclave known as the Vortex, proclaims that the gun is good and the penis is evil, and proceeds to vomit up rifles for Exterminators dressed in scarlet loincloths who terrorize the old-fashioned humans known as the Brutals. When a virile genius of an Exterminator named Zed (Sean Connery) sneaks into the Vortex, he finds that even this closed society is divided among the effete Eternals, the Apathetics, who've lost any will to live, and the Renegades, who actively seek death. The movie means to examine such issues as the use of religion to maintain power and the danger of denying humanity's animal roots, but it devotes much of its time to a rampant appreciation of women's breasts (it's less positive about their brains). If there were more erotic vaudeville and less depressive blather about the need for death to give meaning to life, the movie might have become a hoot instead of a howler. Still, you've got to admire Geoffrey Unsworth's supernal cinematography and Boorman's mad integrity in choosing this 1974 flop as the follow-up to his 1972 smash, "Deliverance."—*M.S.* (BAM Rose Cinemas; Oct. 1.)

ALSO PLAYING

A DIRTY SHAME
Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, Empire 25, and Lincoln Square.

GOODBYE, DRAGON INN
Cinema Village.

NAPOLEON DYNAMITE (6/28/04)
Battery Park 11, 84th Street Sixplex, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, and Sunshine Cinema.

RICK
Angelika Film Center.

THEATRE ADDRESSES

Unless noted, call 212-777-FILM for show times.

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St.
BAM Rose Cinemas, 30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn.
Battery Park 11, West St. at Vesey St.
Beekman, Second Ave. at 66th St.
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd St.
Chelsea West, 333 W. 23rd St.
Cinemas 1, 2, and 3, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St. (212-924-3363).
East 86th Street Cinemas, Third Ave. at 86th St.
84th Street Sixplex, Broadway at 84th St.
Empire 25, on 42nd St. near Eighth Ave. (212-398-3939).
Film Forum, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (212-727-8110).
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd St.
42nd Street E Walk, 42nd St. near Eighth Ave.
Kips Bay Theatre, Second Ave. at 32nd St.
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Broadway at 63rd St. (212-757-2280).
Lincoln Square, Broadway at 68th St.
New York Twin, Second Ave. at 66th St.
19th Street East 6, Broadway at 19th St.
Orpheum VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Paris, 4 W. 58th St. (212-688-3800).
Pioneer Theatre, 155 E. 3rd St. (212-254-3300).
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th St.
72nd Street East, Third Ave. at 71st St.
64th and 2nd, Second Ave. at 64th St.
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd St.
Sunshine Cinema, 143 E. Houston St. (212-330-8182).
Sutton 1 and 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.
34th Street Theatre, 312 W. 34th St.
Union Square, Broadway at 13th St.
Village East Cinemas, Second Ave. at 12th St.
Village Theatre VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th St.

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE
35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—Through Oct. 11: The Subway Centennial Film Festival. Oct. 2 at 2: "Subway Stories" (1995, Bob Balaban et al.). ♦ Oct. 2-3 at 4: "On the Town" (1949, Stanley Donen). ♦ Oct. 3 at 2: "Manhandled" (1924, Allan Dwan; silent). ♦ Repertory nights. Oct. 2-3 at 6:30: "El Cid" (†).

ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES
32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (212-505-5110)—Starting Oct. 2: The New York Turkish Film Festival. See www.moonandstarsproject.org for a schedule. ♦ World première. Oct. 2 at 8:30 and Oct. 3-5 at 7 and 9: "The Whisper of the Whistling Water" (2004, Brigitte Cornand). ♦ "Essential Cinema." Oct. 3 at 3:30 and 5: Georges Méliès films (1904-12).

BAM ROSE CINEMAS
30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-777-3456)—Sept. 29: Selections from the New Fest, a gay-and-lesbian film festival. ♦ Through Oct. 5: John Boorman films. Oct. 1 at 2, 4:30, 6:50, and 9:15: "Zardoz" (†). ♦ Oct. 2 at 2, 4:30, 6:50, and 9:15: "Point Blank" (1967). ♦ Oct. 3 at 2, 4:30, 6:50, and 9:15: "Deliverance" (1972). ♦ Oct. 4 at 6 and 9: "The Emerald Forest" (1985). ♦ Oct. 5 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:15: "Hell in the Pacific" (1968).

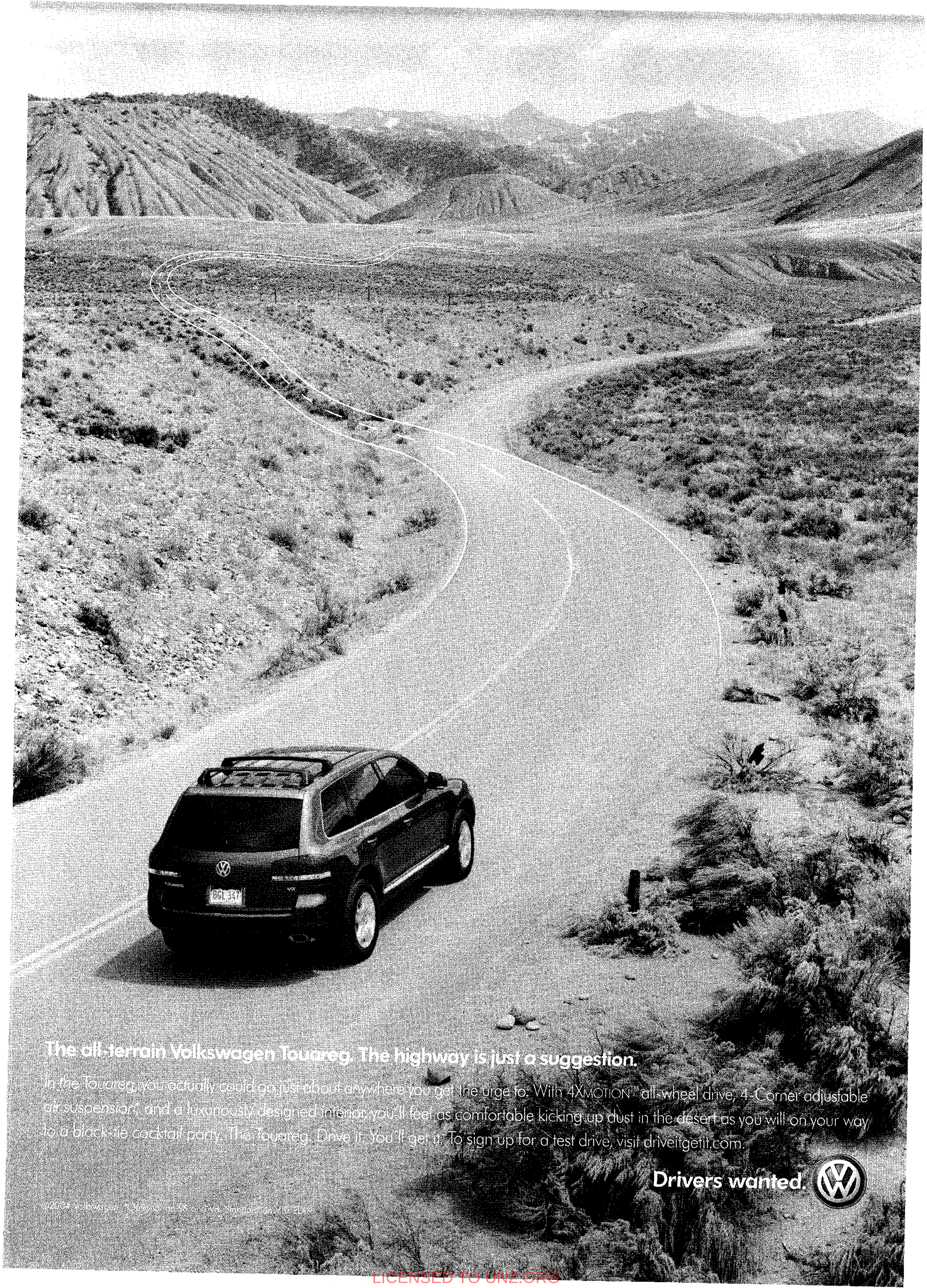
FILM FORUM
W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (212-727-8110)— Sept. 29-Oct. 5 at 1:10, 3:40, 7, and 9:30: "Burn!" (1969, Gillo Pontecorvo).

FLORENCE GOULD HALL
55 E. 59th St. (212-355-6160)—Through Dec. 21: "Sisters: Dorléac and Deneuve." Oct. 5 at 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, and 9: "The Soft Skin" (1964, François Truffaut; in French).

THE NEW YORK FILM FESTIVAL
Lincoln Center (212-875-5050)—All screenings will be held at Alice Tully Hall, except for the opening and closing-night premières, which will be held at Avery Fisher Hall. Oct. 1 at 8:15: "Look at Me" (2004, Agnès Jaoui; in French). ♦ Oct. 2 at 11 A.M.: The restored version of "The Big Red One" (1980, Samuel Fuller). ♦ Oct. 2 at 3 and Oct. 3 at 6:30: "Triple Agent" (2004, Eric Rohmer; in French). ♦ Oct. 2 at 6: "Tropical Malady" (2004, Apichatpong Weerasethakul; in Thai). ♦ Oct. 2 at 9 and Oct. 3 at 1:30: "Undertow" (2004, David Gordon Green). ♦ Oct. 3 at 4:15 and Oct. 4 at 9: "Notre Musique" (2004, Jean-Luc Godard; in French). ♦ Oct. 3 at 9:30 and Oct. 4 at 6: "In the Battlefields" (2004, Danielle Arbid; in Arabic). ♦ Oct. 5 at 6: "Or (My Treasure)" (2004, Keren Yedaya; in Hebrew). ♦ Oct. 5 at 9: "Tarnation" (2004, Jonathan Caouette).

SUNSHINE CINEMA
143 E. Houston St. (212-330-8182)—Midnight movies. Oct. 1-2: "Breakfast at Tiffany's" (1961, Blake Edwards).

WALTER READE THEATRE
Lincoln Center (212-875-5600)—Through Sept. 29: "Latinbeat 2004: Recent Films from Latin America." All films are in Spanish. Sept. 29 at 5: "Pulque Song" (2003, Everardo González). ♦ Sept. 29 at 7: "Journey to the Sea" (2003, Guillermo Casanova). ♦ Sept. 29 at 8:45: "Ana and the Others" (2003, Celina Murga). ♦ Starting Oct. 2: "Elegance, Passion, and Cold Hard Steel: A Tribute to Shaw Brothers Studios." All films are in Cantonese. Oct. 2 at 7:30, Oct. 3 at 4:30, and Oct. 4 at 4 and 8:40: "The Love Eterne" (1962, Li Han-hsiang). ♦ Oct. 3 at noon and Oct. 5 at 4 and 8:30: "Vermillion Door" (1964, Lo Chen). ♦ Oct. 3 at 2:30 and Oct. 5 at 6:30: "The Kingdom and the Beauty" (1958, Li). ♦ Oct. 3 at 7: "The House of 72 Tenants" (1973, Chu Yuan). ♦ Oct. 3 at 9 and Oct. 4 at 6:30: "The Empress Dowager" (1975, Li).



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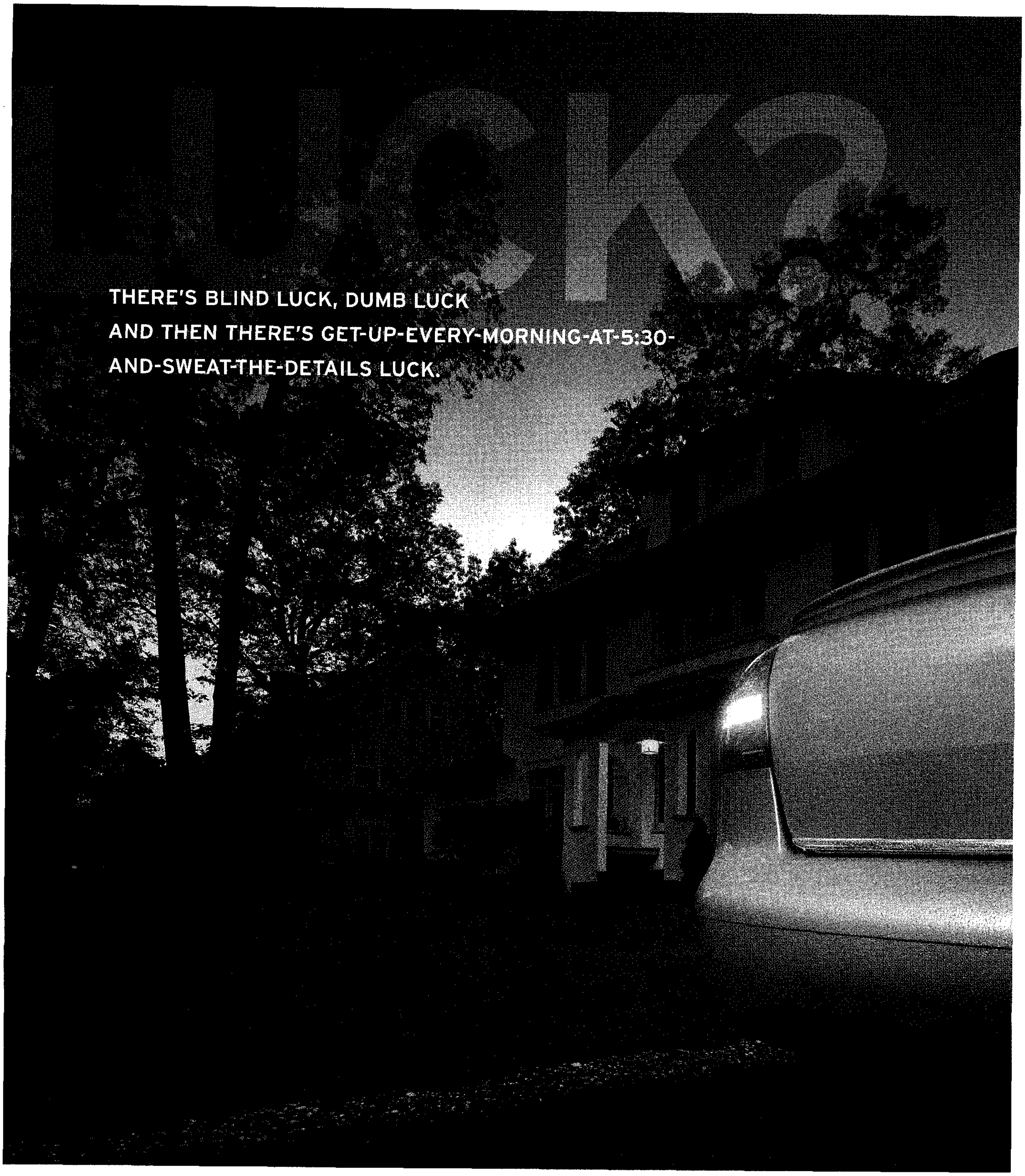
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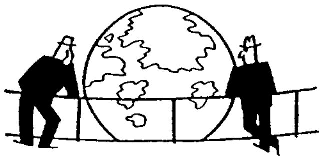
THE
NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

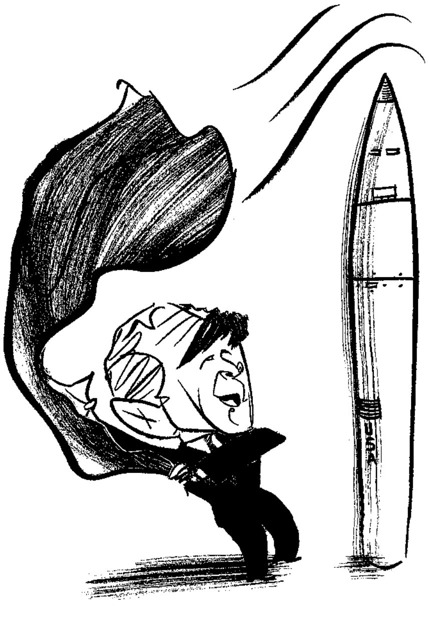
COMMENT
INDEFENSIBLE



In July, the first interceptor for a national missile-defense system was installed at Fort Greely, Alaska. A few weeks later, President Bush announced that the first components of that system would soon "become operational." Speaking at a Boeing aerospace plant in Ridley Park, Pennsylvania, on August 17th, he praised the efforts of those who are making the deployment possible, and declared, "We say to those tyrants who believe they can blackmail America and the free world, 'You fire, we're going to shoot it down.' " It will come as a surprise to Americans and tyrants alike that the controversial system is ready to shoot anything down—not much has been heard about it since the attacks of September 11, 2001, redefined the national notion of defense. Yet Bush promised to develop the system in his last campaign, and in December, 2002, a year after the Administration announced that it would withdraw from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, he ordered that deployment take place in 2004. The due date became October 1st.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BACHTELL

For the past three years, officials at the Missile Defense Agency have worked overtime to create a system that they say will neutralize a missile threat from North Korea. In collaboration with Orbital and other contractors, they have built a new three-stage booster rocket and "kill vehicle" for the interceptor. They have built a seven-hundred-acre missile field at Fort Greely, and modified four silos at Vandenberg Air Force Base, in California. They have laid a thirteen-thousand-mile-long fibre-optic cable linking Washington, D.C., to Fort Greely, several sites in California, and the U.S. Northern Command, at Cheyenne Mountain, Colorado. At a site in Corpus Christi, Texas, they are constructing a sophisticated radar that will be mobile and seaborne. Twenty-five stories high and weighing fifty thousand tons, the radar will be installed on a self-propelled oil platform, and, because it is too big to fit through the Panama Canal, it will have to sail around Cape Horn on its way up to the Aleutian Islands, dodging gales from the Bering Sea.



Still, despite all this effort, the deployment will be much less than complete. As envisaged by the Bush Administration, the system is to eventually include two satellites (one in high orbit, one in low) to assist in the early detection of missile launches, track missiles, and help guide interceptors to their targets. Both satellites have fallen years behind schedule, however, so, until the new radar arrives, the interceptors will have to rely in large part on radar systems that were developed in the nineteen-sixties and seventies to provide early warning of Soviet missile launches. The most important system, in the Aleutians, has not been tested for its new role, and, because of the way it is positioned, it would not be able to detect a North Korean launch aimed at Hawaii. Ten interceptors were scheduled to be in place, but, by the time of deployment, there will be at most five or six, and no one knows whether they can hit anything, because they have not yet been tested against targets.

Between 1999 and December, 2002, a prototype anti-missile interceptor did succeed five times out of eight in hitting a dummy warhead in space. However, it was given information that the North Koreans would be unlikely to provide, such as the time and place of the launch and the missile's trajectory. Moreover, the tests were purely preliminary. They did not show whether the system would work at night, or in bad weather, or against multiple warheads, or against a warhead of relatively crude design that would tumble instead of spin. At the time, the Pentagon's

“You don’t look like a hurricane victim to me.”

• •

chief of testing estimated that it would be a decade or more before the system would be ready for operational tests, and, like many other weapons experts, he questioned whether the system would ever be able to distinguish between warheads and decoys as simple as Mylar balloons.

As of December, 2002, the M.D.A. had scheduled more intercept tests before the deployment date, but, partly because of technical setbacks, including problems in building a new booster, none of them have taken place. (According to the former chief of testing, no flight intercept tests will be done at Fort Greely, because of safety and environmental concerns.) Currently, there are no announced plans to test the interceptor against challenging targets or under unscripted conditions, and operational testing isn’t even on the horizon.

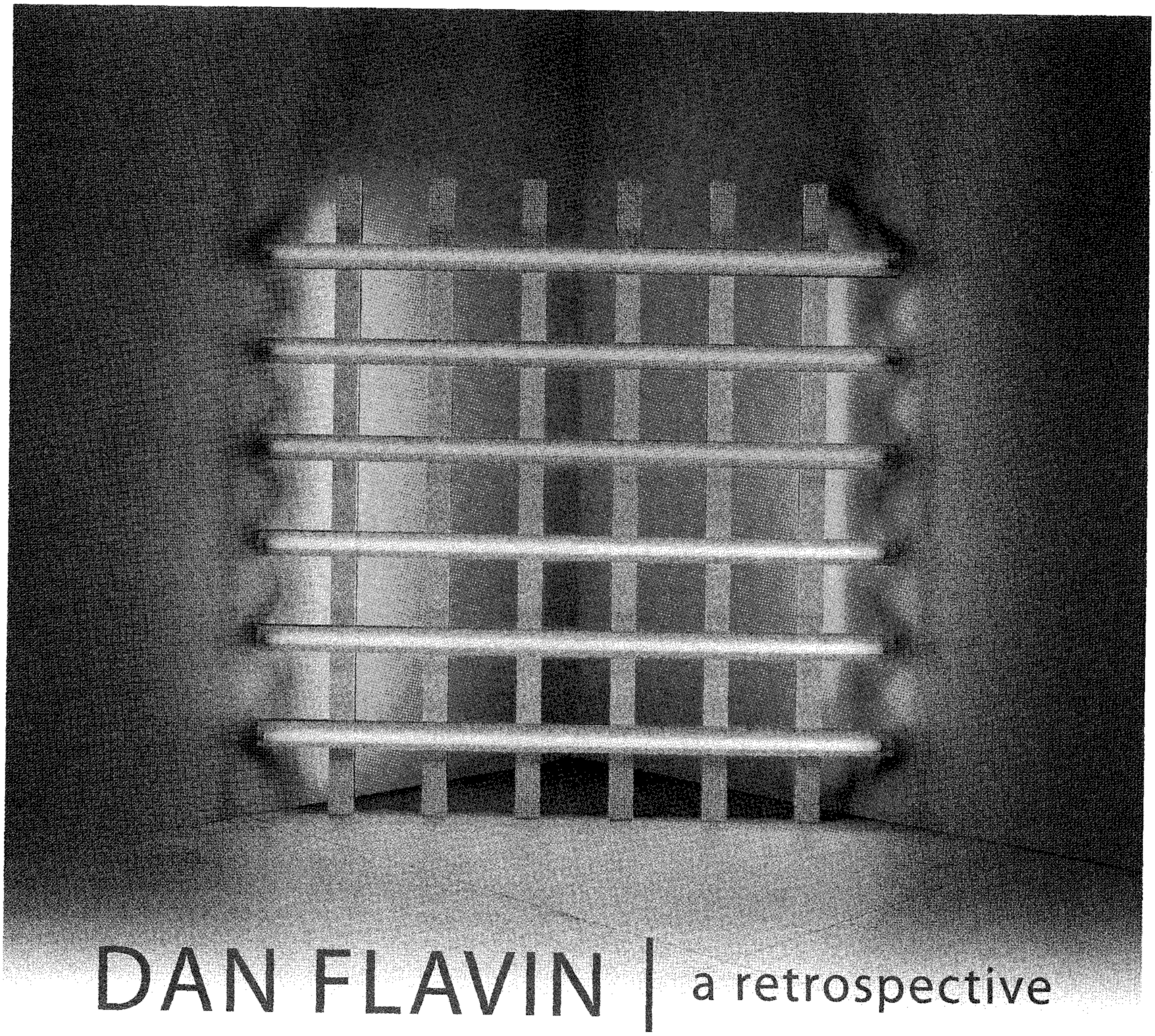
Owing largely to the costs of development and deployment, the missile-defense budget has doubled in the past four years. The appropriation for next year is more than ten billion dollars—about the same as the Army’s entire R. & D. budget, twice the budget of the Bureau of Customs and Border Protection in the Department of Homeland Security, and nearly twice the department’s allocation for the Coast Guard. The M.D.A. estimates that the program will cost fifty-three billion dollars through 2009, but it has underestimated costs in the past. Last year’s projection, for example, included the cost of deploying twenty interceptors at Fort Greely and Vandenberg by the end of 2005, but the Administration also requested twenty additional interceptors, and it is talking with Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic about radar sites and possible missile-defense emplacements, which officials say will protect the United States and Europe from missiles launched from the Middle East—specifically, from Iran.

M.D.A. officials deny that there is anything political about the Administration’s decision to deploy an incomplete and untested system. The system, they explain, will remain in development; the Alaska installations will provide a more realistic “test bed,” while giving the country some protection from the threat of an attack. Their logic, however, escapes many military experts. The system is designed to attack only ICBMs. North Korea hasn’t tested a long-range missile since its last test failed, six years ago, and Iran has been developing missiles with ranges too short to hit Western Europe, much less the United States. Senator John Kyl, of Arizona, a leading missile-defense advocate, recently called ballistic missiles “the one threat that exists against us which we do not yet have a capability of defeating,” but in fact the United States does have such a capability, in its precision-guided missiles, which would surely be used to destroy an enemy ICBM on its launchpad if an attack seemed imminent. How to protect the nation from terrorists with box cutters and suitcase bombs is not so clear. This spring, forty-nine retired generals and admirals called upon the President to put off the deployment and to transfer the funds to the securing of nuclear facilities and the protection of American ports and borders against the far more immediate danger of Al Qaeda, rather than pursue a system that may never work against a threat that doesn’t now exist.

—*Frances FitzGerald*

THE WEEK IN DIGNITARIES
HOT TICKET

Third week in September: back to school at the United Nations. No sooner had the Fashion Week tents come down in Bryant Park than gravitas (of a sort) returned to the city, ushered in by motorcades ferrying visiting dignitaries between the U.N. and various East Side cocktail parties. For foreign-policy buffs—and who, these days, doesn’t have a world view to propound?—the concentration of big shots and big speeches occasioned a rush of invitation anxiety and panel overload. John Kerry made sure to see and be seen, last Monday, just before the opening of the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly; he squeezed in a lecture on Iraq (at N.Y.U.), an awards-ceremony keynote address (at Lincoln Center), and a fund-raising gala (at the Hilton). The fund-raiser brought Kerry within blocks of President Bush, who was over at the Sher-



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Dan Flavin, untitled (in honor of Harold Joachim) 3, 1977. Photo: Billy Jim, Courtesy Dia Art Foundation © Stephen Flavin/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

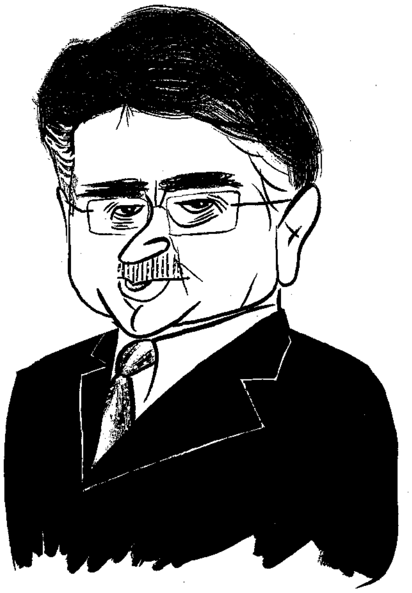
aton raising money, before he set up shop in the Presidential suite at the Waldorf.

But many of the week's hot tickets were nominally nonpartisan. A sizable line forming alongside a Park Avenue town house, late Thursday morning, commanded special attention. So many well-cut suits, so much well-kept gray hair, a police barricade: "Who is this for?" a passerby asked.

"The President of Pakistan."

"Oh!" she replied, turning to a friend. "It's the President of *Pakistan*."

Pervez Musharraf, Pakistan's Chief Executive, was the scheduled guest speaker at the Council on Foreign Relations that afternoon—the headliner, in a sense, of a weeklong wonkfest at the council's Sixty-eighth Street clubhouse. Among the warmup acts were the Emir of Qatar, for dinner on Monday, and President Mikhail Saakashvili, of Georgia, for Wednesday lunch. But it was Musharraf whose talk—his fourth in as many years—brought out the greatest array of armchair diplomats and the special pleading for last-minute seats. By Tuesday, the waiting list among council members ran about a hundred deep. Two overflow rooms, with closed-circuit television, had been set up to accommodate the audience. "It's a little bit like a restaurant or an airplane: you overbook," Richard Haass, the council president, said.



Pervez Musharraf

Security was tight—Musharraf has been the target of several assassination attempts—and the line outside inched slowly forward. Two tanned elderly men chatted near the front, sounding not unlike Deadheads discussing the fall tour.

"Is this the first Musharraf appearance you've been to?" one asked.

"Yes, it is," replied his friend, who was wearing tweed.

"Well, I think he's very interesting. I find him to be straightforward and candid."

"It's a miracle he's still alive."

"Oh, I know," the first man said. "This'll be the third time I've seen him."

Once inside, the council members traded stories about memorable performances past. Who could forget Hamid Karzai, in 2002, shortly after he became the President of Afghanistan? That was standing-room only, and of course there'd been a lot of buzz about his emerald-green shawl.

"He was just extraordinary—so candid," one member, a hedge-fund manager in his early thirties, said.

"I call that the 'Better Him Than Me' speech," another, a management consultant, added. "When it was over, everyone just exhaled: 'Better him than me.' "

Not all council events are rated equal (next week's breakfast with Nicolas Sarkozy, the French finance minister, has been called only a "moderately hot" ticket), and neither are its members. In the conference room, people took their seats and scanned the attendance list—"That's your Sunday Styles section," the management consultant explained—for V.I.P.s.

"I see Ted Sorensen's on here," he added. "There's living history right there."

"Look, there's David Rockefeller in the front row," a woman sitting toward the back exclaimed. "He's, like, ninety."

There was no sign of Henry Kissinger, however, and no George Soros. "You know, I think an Eastern European accent is worth an automatic fifty I.Q. points," the hedge-fund manager said.

"Actually, I think an Oxbridge accent is worth at least twenty," the consultant said.

And then it was one o'clock—showtime—and Ambassador Richard Holbrooke, the event's moderator, took the stage to introduce Musharraf. There he was, the General, dressed conservatively, his hair parted down the middle. It would, presumably, not be a violation of the council's off-the-record mandate to report that he spoke *candidly* and displayed a winning sense of humor. Holbrooke certainly seemed pleased. Haass said that he thought Musharraf had "hit a home run."

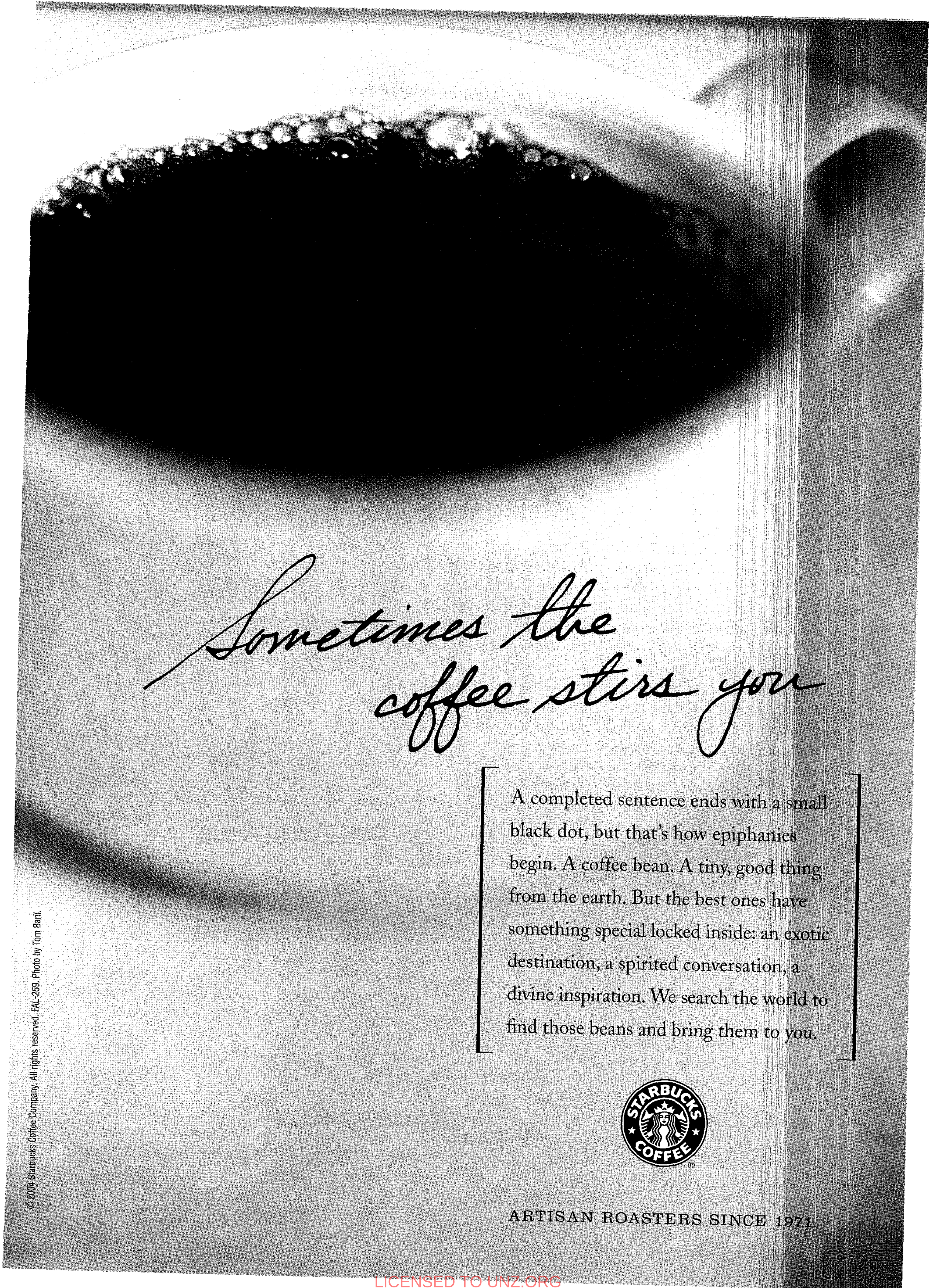
" 'A tough man for a tough job'—that's my one-line summary," the consultant said. "Before, I'd have estimated the chance of nuclear mishap in Pakistan at thirty per cent. Now I'd say it's twenty per cent." He added, "I feel more secure having seen him speak in person."

—Ben McGrath

ROME POSTCARD
BOFFO BEATITUDE

Last Tuesday, a double-decker sightseeing bus was inching its way along Via della Conciliazione, the wide thoroughfare that leads to St. Peter's Basilica, in Rome. The bus, which was plastered all over with an advertisement for the DVD of Mel Gibson's movie "The Passion of the Christ," stopped frequently. For a moment, a trick of perspective made the church's dome look like a beanie sitting on top of the bloody, thorn-crowned head of Jesus Christ that covered the back of the bus. The same peculiar alignment of religion and Hollywood was evident in the shops along the approach to St. Peter's. "The Passion"™ was taking up space that the crucifixes, rosaries, and other untrademarked forms of devotion once occupied.

On Sunday, in the piazza in front of St. Peter's, Pope John Paul II will beatify Sister Anne Catherine Emmerich, the nineteenth-century nun whose visionary account of Jesus' last twelve hours was a major source for Gibson's film. Sister Anne was a mostly illiterate German nun who, in 1812, when she was thirty-eight, began to manifest stigmata, starting with a circle of bleeding wounds around her head, followed by wounds on her hands and feet and the imprint of a cross on her chest. The Romantic poet Clemens Brentano spent five years at her bedside, taking notes while she mentally travelled back in time and became a spectator at Jesus' Crucifixion, describing the scene with a cinematic eye for detail that the Gospel writers cannot match. She saw, for example, the type of whips the Romans used to flog Jesus ("straps covered with iron hooks, which penetrated to the bone, and tore off large pieces of flesh at



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every blow"). In 1833, nine years after Emmerich's death, Brentano published the nun's visions as "The Dolorous Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ." The book was famous throughout Europe for much of the nineteenth century; travellers to Jerusalem used it as a kind of spiritual Baedeker for the sites of the Passion, even though Emmerich herself had never been there. The gruesome account of Christ's physical suffering had an effect on nineteenth-century readers not unlike the impact Gibson's "Passion" has had on modern moviegoers.

Because the Pope has already made his enthusiasm for the movie known ("It is as it was," he reportedly said), and has granted a private audience to the actor James Caviezel, who played Jesus in the film (and who is rumored to be in talks to play Superman), one might think that the Church is now awarding a kind of celestial Oscar to Emmerich for her many, uncredited contributions to Gibson's script. In fact, according to the Vatican her writings didn't enter into the Church's decision. Father Peter Gumpel, who is one of the Vatican's "relators," or investigating judges, said last week, "She is being judged not on the basis of the writing but only on the basis of her virtuous life."

When Emmerich was first put forward for beatification, in the nineteen-twenties, Church examiners concluded that Brentano, not Emmerich, was the author of most of her visions, and that they were literary inventions, not divine revelations. (After Brentano's death, in 1842, examiners discovered in his library detailed guidebooks about Jerusalem.) In the early nineteen-seventies, when Emmerich was again proposed for beatification, the authorities resolved to consider only the circumstances of her saintly life, such as the fact that for her final ten years she subsisted entirely on water and Communion wafers.

Even so, Sunday's beatification, which is the final stage before sainthood, is bound to be interpreted as an endorsement of Emmerich's literary legacy—a legacy that, like "The Passion," has been trailed by controversy. In addition to being mostly fiction, the "Dolorous Passion" appears to be anti-Semitic, at least to many contemporary readers. Father John O'Malley, a professor at the Weston Jesuit School of Theology in Cambridge, Massachusetts, describes the Emmerich-Brentano collaboration as "badly dated, naïve, sometimes ridiculous and sometimes seriously offensive."

Father Paul Robichaud, the former rector of the Church of St. Susanna, in Rome, said that he thinks it is "slightly disingenuous" of the Vatican to maintain that the recent interest in Emmerich's writings, fuelled by Gibson, wasn't a factor in her beatification. "There are thousands of cases waiting for approval," he said. And when there's renewed or current interest in a would-be saint, he added, "some cases, like Emmerich's, get a bump."

—*John Seabrook*

OVERHAULS
POINT OF VIEW

Last spring, the owners of The View, Manhattan's only revolving restaurant, which is at the top of the Marriott Marquis in Times Square, shut the place down to repair what had come to seem a serious problem. "People were just sitting at their tables and looking straight *out*," Olvia Demetriou, the architect who oversaw a four-million-dollar renovation, said the other day. "After the long journey"—the restaurant occupies the forty-seventh through forty-ninth floors and looks out on three hundred and sixty degrees of midtown—"all you had at The View was really the view. When you arrived, it was downright depressing. There was rug art as the entry feature wall. There was this white kind of popcorn spray-on treatment on the walls."

"Think of the entire hotel's being designed in the nineteen-seventies and opened in the eighties," Kathleen Duffy, the hotel's publicist, said as she led a tour. "It was burgundy colors, brass, lots of mirrors." Members of the staff piped up with other incriminating details: a tatty carpet, hideous upholstery. Kevin Prendergast, the hotel's executive chef, was more succinct. "*Nasty*," he muttered.

The new décor (aubergine carpet, poppy-colored leather, a silver beaded curtain), however, raised another obstacle: the food at The View would have to compete with the interior, which competes with the view. "We don't want to have a reputation for bad food," Prendergast said. Someone asked if that had been the case before. Another chef, standing behind his boss, frowned and nodded.

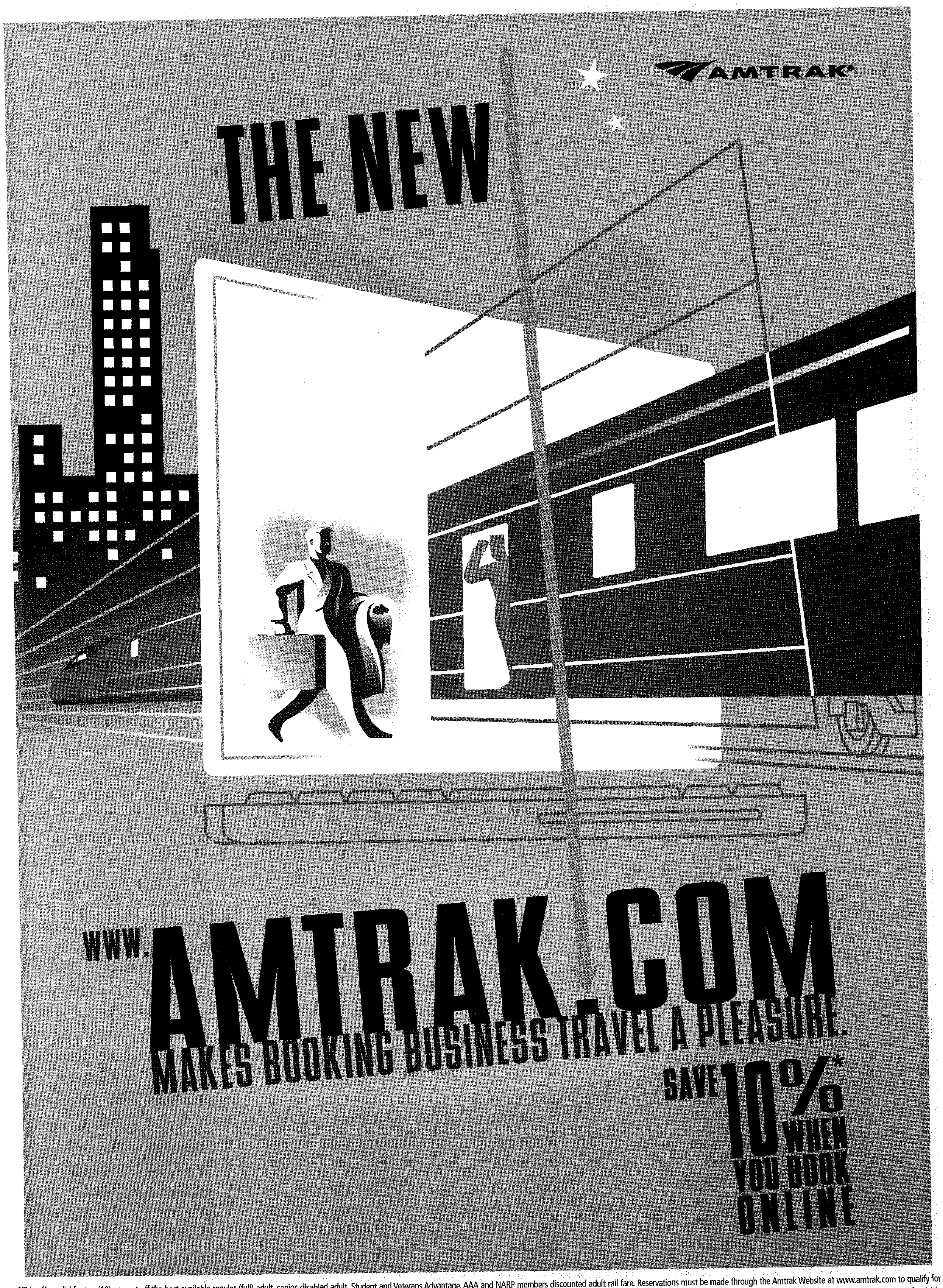
The revolving mechanism is one of the few original features that remain. It has never broken down, knock wood. (In the new space, one can choose among cherry, ebony veneer, and some vestigial maple.) The engine—three-quarter horsepower, roughly equivalent to that of a Cuisinart—is underneath the floor at the center of the restaurant, which revolves at the just perceptible rate of one full turn every fifty-eight minutes.

One night last week, a few days after the reopening, the view to the west was of the sun setting over Weehawken—the sky eyeshadow blue, the clouds charcoal and orange—and red brake lights glowing in a line along a crosstown street. Inside was dim and noisy; a digital camera flashed. A man sitting with his date at a table near the window pointed out piers along the Hudson. "See the first one? See the second one? See the third one?" he asked her. He was trying to show her the Intrepid.

Sodium-lit office towers plastered with illuminated billboards crept into sight, and soon the Viacom Building loomed. For a long moment, you could see a woman with her hair in a bun sitting in an office, packing up a bag. From the unmoving center of the floor, you could watch a waiter, standing still beside an empty table, drift by, like a feather in a wake.

The cocktail napkins, like pre-Copernican maps of the universe, show the restaurant at the center of the city, with the thirty-one buildings that are visible from it splayed out like spokes on a wheel. Tom Rice, a concierge who has worked at the hotel since 1998 and thinks of himself "kind of like the New York person in the building, the history person," has twice updated the napkins to reflect the changing skyline. Several years ago, he included Bear Stearns, Bertelsmann, and the RIHGA Royal, another Marriott hotel. Now he has added the Condé Nast Building, the Lehman Brothers Building, the old Met Life tower, and the Time Life Building, which used to be obscured. Madison Square Garden, unfortunately, had to go, because it was blocked by two new hotels: a Hilton and a Weston. But, Rice says, "I didn't put any of our competition on." In his opinion, that would spoil the view.

—*Dana Goodyear*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THE FINANCIAL PAGE
GOOD GROOMING

In July, 1994, Michael Eisner, the C.E.O. of the Walt Disney Company, underwent emergency quadruple-bypass surgery. Just before taking him to the operating room, the doctors gave him a little time to talk to his wife and his sons. Among other things (including his wish to be buried aboveground), Eisner wanted to discuss who would succeed him as C.E.O. if something went wrong. The only candidates he could come up with were his friends Barry Diller and Michael Ovitz. There were no Disney executives on his list. No one at the company, he thought, was capable of taking his place.

This was, as Eisner later wrote in a memo, a "sad truth." He had been in charge of Disney for a decade, long enough, you'd think, for him to develop a crop of up-and-comers. Yet, by his own account, he had failed to do so. In a different movie, his pre-op epiphany would have impelled him to change his ways. But, with the exception of an ill-considered attempt to turn Ovitz into an heir apparent—an experiment that ended after a year, with Eisner paying Ovitz a hundred million dollars to quit—Eisner spent his next decade at Disney as he had his first: refusing to accept that someday he'd have to step down. Investors clamored for Disney to institute a formal succession plan, but Eisner prevented the company's board of directors—most of whom he had handpicked—from producing one. Eventually, facts on the ground overtook him. Earlier this year, Disney's shareholders, weary of Eisner's dominance and of the company's underperformance, effectively deposed him as chairman of the board, and two weeks ago he announced that he would be quitting when his contract expires, in 2006. Disney's board then said that it would pick a new C.E.O. by June of next year, meaning that Eisner may be gone sooner than he expected. Putting off the question of succession allowed Eisner to discourage the emergence of rivals and to keep power concentrated in his own hands. Now it's the reason that that power is being taken away.

Eisner is not the only stubborn one. Most C.E.O.s know that they should devote time to helping their companies get along after they're gone, but historically few have done so. C.E.O.s don't like to think about succession, because it means contemplating the possibility that they're not indispensable. A survey of top companies by the headhunting firm Korn/Ferry found that in 2001 only a third had a formal succession process in place. The rest were winging it.

As ever, ignoring the problem only makes it worse. Without a plan in place, a company must resort to a harried talent search, the boardroom equivalent of Eisner's sickbed pronunciamento. The board is left considering press clippings and résumés. Under such conditions, the candidates tend to come from outside the company, and outsiders, as studies have shown, are more likely to lead companies astray.

CHRISTOPH NIEMANN

By contrast, companies that like to look for C.E.O. candidates in their own corridors—as G.E. and Intel do—invest a lot of time and energy in grooming executives at all levels. (In 1991, a decade before retiring, Jack Welch said that picking a successor was "the most important decision" he would make.) This is good for the organization, and not just the executive suite. And the possibility, however slim, of underlings' one day reaching the top sets up what economists have described as a "tournament model," with executives competing against each other for the prize of becoming chief. The tournament environment can foster infighting and backstabbing, but, at its best, it helps get the most out of people while they're around. It also helps keep them around; ambitious executives get antsy when the C.E.O. seems uninterested in who comes next. Over the past fifteen years, more than a few potential heirs have left Disney, among them Paul Pressler, now the C.E.O. of Gap, Inc., and Stephen Bollenbach, the C.E.O. of Hilton Hotels.

Because Eisner's obduracy has hurt the company in the past, many shareholders—including a few big pension funds and his two chief nemeses, the former Disney board members Stanley Gold and Roy Disney—are now insisting that he leave immediately, without waiting for his replacement. Eisner's a lame duck, they say, and he deserves to be punished for his failures. But kicking him out now wouldn't help Disney. Eisner's biggest flaw as a manager was that he hoarded power and information, and this, oddly, is what makes him useful now; he knows Disney better than anyone else and should be able to help the board figure out what the company should do next. Anyway, the lame-duck concern is exaggerated. There is a host of companies—Intel, Medtronic, American Express—where C.E.O.s have held power effectively for years after announcing their retirements. Since Eisner will retain the power to hire and fire people, and to green-light and kill projects, he will be far from lame. Banishing him now in a fit of pique would be exactly the kind of shortsighted decision that Disney needs to stop making.

The important thing, though, is for the board, and not Eisner, to make that decision. C.E.O.s have been able to get away with neglecting succession for the same reason that they've been able to get away with being grossly overpaid: boards of directors treated them as kings instead of as caretakers, and shareholders seemed not to mind. But that is changing. At Disney, it was a shareholder ruckus that got the directors' attention and convinced them that if they didn't do something about Eisner something would be done about them. In fact, three-quarters of big companies now have a formal process for picking a new boss. Perhaps this is the new sad truth for C.E.O.s: heavier hangs the head that must give up the crown.

—*James Surowiecki*

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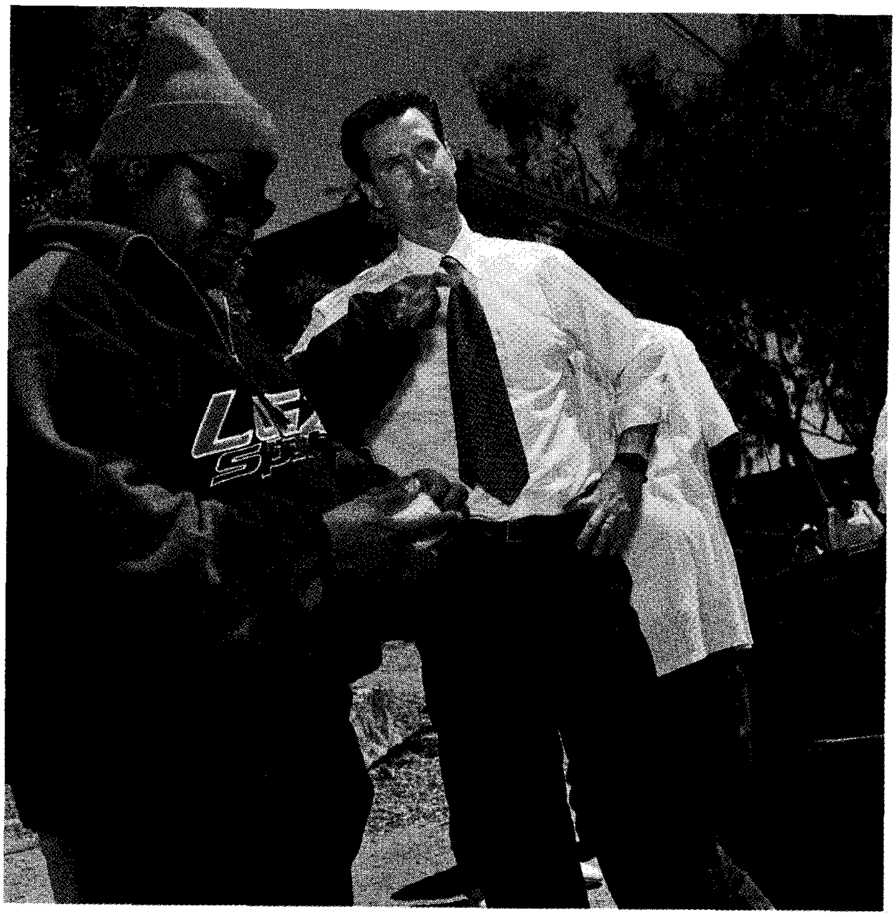
LETTER FROM CALIFORNIA

GOING PLACES

An ambitious young mayor takes San Francisco.

BY TAD FRIEND



Newsom wasn't expected to focus on the inner city. Photograph by Thomas Kern.

Gavin Newsom, the mayor of San Francisco, began fighting City Hall almost as soon as he moved into it. He disliked ceremonial ribbon-cuttings and the way that Room 200, his imposing oak-panelled office, seemed to turn visitors into sycophants. So on Friday mornings and Sundays he started visiting troubled parts of the city on his own, without his usual two-man security detail. He talked to shopkeepers who had witnessed a murder in broad daylight in the Western Addition neighborhood, and shook hands with gang members at a housing project in blighted Bayview, introducing himself like a man still running for office: "Hi, guys, my name is Gavin Newsom and I work for you. Give me direction—what do you need?"

Newsom, who is six feet two and has the look and slicked-back hair of a silent-screen actor, is, at thirty-six, the city's youngest mayor in more than a century. He has a knack for drawing attention to himself, and may already have generated more headlines than his predecessor, Willie Brown, a smooth-talking veteran of four decades in California politics. Since Newsom took office, in January, "60 Minutes" has done a segment on him; he has twice appeared on Charlie Rose's program; and *Newsweek* has touted him, along with Barack Obama, as one of five stars of the Democratic Party.

One sunny morning in April, Newsom convened his department heads for a field trip, or "workday." They went to the Sunnydale projects, a hillside dotted with barracks-style apartments that sometimes provide cover in shooting wars between the Up the Hill gang and the Down the Hill gang. As the Mayor walked among the units, voicing his dismay, twenty-one officials and community activists trotted behind him, taking notes. "Do we like garbage on the lawn?" Newsom said. "No, we do not." And: "See all this broken glass? Kids can't play here—it's totally unacceptable." And: "No swings in the swing set, guys. Must. Get. Swings." His voice was gravelly, still raw from last fall's campaign. As the Mayor pointed out junked cars to be towed and a basketball court that badly needed grading, Sunnydale's residents fell in behind what had become a parade.

"We never had a mayor come down this far—they don't want to go where the bullets fly and kids die," Regina Fontero, a security guard who has lived in Sunnydale for more than fifteen years, said in a loud voice. "But he's down in the trenches with his sleeves rolled up!"

Standing on the sloping court, Newsom grinned at this unsolicited sound bite and mimed making a layup. At age seventeen, Newsom was drafted by the Texas Rangers, and though he opted for a partial baseball scholarship to college (where he blew out his left, or throwing, elbow), if he gets near a court he invariably tries to spark up a game. When he visited a reform school a few days later, a half-dozen sixteen-year-olds who'd been listlessly watching basketball on television filed outside after they saw the Mayor shooting baskets in the midday heat. He tossed them a ball. "I don't want to break an old man's ankle," one said. "Y'all in church shoes." "Church shoes!" Newsom repeated, considering his black oxfords with amusement. He sank a long jumper and looked over: "Church shoes!"

After touring Sunnydale, Newsom returned to a store, the Little Village Market, whose bleak appearance had occasioned his complaints an hour earlier. He looked almost surprised to see that it was still standing. But for all the camera-ready showmanship of these appearances (Newsom usually has his white shirt-sleeves rolled up and his favorite silver-and-blue rep tie loosened, just so), they are not simply for show. By the end of July, the Sunnydale basketball court had been repaved and given new nets, and swings were in place on the playground;

LOOKAT

within a month of Newsom's visit to Bayview, nearly a million dollars' worth of improvements had gone into its projects. Arelious Walker, who is seventy-three and a pastor at Bayview's True Hope Church of God in Christ, told me, "Our people are excited, because this mayor is acting for them, and they believe he's serious. Willie Brown was a nice mayor, but he never done like this mayor."

Gavin Newsom, a Democrat, came into office after a runoff election in which he narrowly beat—and vastly outspent—the Green Party candidate. He was not expected to spend much time in the inner city. Newsom and his wife, Kimberly Guilfoyle Newsom, a former assistant district attorney who is now an anchor on Court TV, have star quality, of the sort that recently inspired *Harper's Bazaar* to devote an eight-page photo spread to the couple and to call them "the new Kennedys." Newsom himself is a millionaire who owns cafés, a winery, clothing shops, and a resort hotel, all built with financial help from Gordon Getty, a close friend of Newsom's father, William A. Newsom. Getty, a billionaire heir to the J. Paul Getty oil fortune, used to include Gavin and his sister, Hilary, on Getty family vacations to watch whales in Canada and elephants in Kenya. "I think of Gavin as a son," Gordon Getty told me.

The Mayor's mentors also include John L. Burton, the president pro tem of the California Senate, and Nancy Pelosi, the Minority Leader of the United States House of Representatives, who have invested in his businesses; California's senators, Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer; and Willie Brown, who gave Newsom his start in politics when he appointed him to an open seat on the Board of Supervisors, in 1997. Tom Ammiano, one of several city supervisors whom Newsom defeated in what started out as a nine-candidate mayoral race, says, "He's a thirty-six-year-old golden boy with Getty money. There are large ambitions here—the Gettys, Nancy Pelosi, Dianne Feinstein: they're thinking, President Newsom." When I asked Gordon Getty if he thinks about a Newsom Presidency, he replied, "Of course." When I asked Pelosi if she thought about it, she said, "I certainly do," adding that Newsom "has the leadership qualities" and also that "he's a very beautiful, lovely person."

As mayor, Newsom showed up at homicide scenes as a way to goad the Police Department into improving its dismal rate of cleared murder cases—at thirty-one per cent, half the average rate for major American cities. He appointed the city's first female police chief and the country's first female big-city fire chief. Facing a three-hundred-and-seven-million-dollar budget deficit, a record, he cut his own salary by fifteen per cent and fired more than a thousand people from jobs he had identified as superfluous. Many of those let go had been hired by Willie Brown.

Most surprising was a policy that drew attention far beyond San Francisco: in mid-February, Newsom directed the city clerk to begin marrying same-sex couples in defiance of the state statute that prohibits gay marriage—under the doubtful but audacious theory that the statute violated California's constitution. By the time the state's lower courts halted the proceedings twenty-nine days later, more than four thousand couples had got married in a "Winter of Love" that, many San Franciscans felt, restored the city to its onetime status as an avatar of social rebellion. (The glow from all this was dimmed on August 12th, when the California Supreme Court unanimously ruled that the Mayor had overstepped his authority, and took the further step of nullifying all those marriages.)

In early September, Newsom's approval rating stood at seventy-eight per cent, an astounding figure for the Bay Area, which often savages its leaders. (John Francis Shelley, a one-term mayor in the sixties, called the job "an endless, impossible, and exhausting drain.") It has been a giddy and often disorienting ride. Newsom still talks about his encounter with George W. Bush at a black-tie dinner in Washington in March, not long after Bush had called Newsom's marriage initiative "troubling" and Newsom had termed Bush's proposal for a constitutional amendment forbidding gay marriage "cowardly" and "disgraceful." As Newsom recounted it, "Nancy Pelosi introduced us, and the President goes, 'Mister Mayor'"—Newsom slipped into a Bush impression, so it came out "Mistur Mare"—"and he goes on, 'That's the toughest job in politics, Mare.' I said, 'It can't be as tough as your job, Mr. President.' 'Well, probably only my job is

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THE NEW SCHOOL

tougher, eh-heh, eh-heh.' Someone said, 'He's the youngest mayor in history,' and the President puts his arm around me and says, 'I'm proud a you, I'm proud a you,' and then a minute later he looks back and says, 'I won't be travelling to San Francisco soon, eh-heh, eh-heh, eh-heh.' It was like watching a skit on 'Saturday Night Live,' with Bush laughing, the shoulders moving, everything. Then we all took a photo together and smiled. There seemed to be no animus, no recognition of the debate we'd just had. It was . . . odd."

Newsom's admirers call him a natural, a Clinton without the neediness and excess, but the comparison doesn't quite hold up. For one thing, Newsom is weak at pageantry: he filibusters his allies, and he can be standoffish with strangers. At a press conference about banning assault weapons, when a mother whose son had been killed with an AK-47 broke down Newsom gave her a hand grip, then, belatedly, a cheek peck and sideways clasp. He has not mastered the bear hug of felt pain.

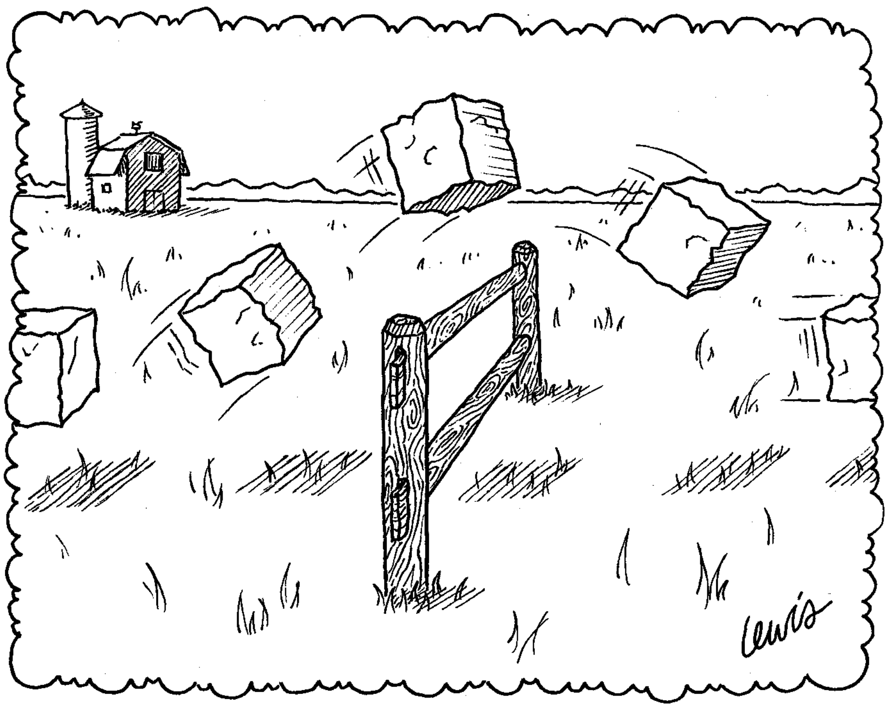
Like Clinton, though, Newsom is something of a policy wonk—a favorite of the centrist Democratic Leadership Council. Al From, the D.L.C.'s founder and an early Clinton supporter, praises Newsom as "a new Democrat, a bright young star who's on top of the latest in the priorities-budgeting process." Newsom, who listens to his staff debate with his left forefinger alongside his temple, occasionally interjecting, "Interesting, interesting," does at times suggest that governance consists of constructing a dashboard of key performance indicators and then fiddling with the knobs. His wife calls him Rain Man for his habit of spouting statistics and quoting from such political self-help primers as "The Price of Government: Getting the Results We Need in an Age of Permanent Fiscal Crisis." These volumes are usually close at hand, and bear the impress of his yellow highlighter, which he carries even to the pool and on vacation.

As a child, Newsom was teased for being slow-witted and was finally given a diagnosis of dyslexia; he often reads material four or five times, trying to absorb it with the same frowning focus that he once brought to practicing free throws. Newsom's hero since boyhood has been Robert F. Kennedy—like Newsom, a wealthy Irish Catholic who became increasingly progressive; Newsom's friend Lori Puccinelli Stern recalls his insisting that she and her husband listen to tapes of Kennedy speeches when they drove to Lake Tahoe for the weekend—he seemed to require that they feel inspired. (Newsom's favorite was R.F.K.'s 1966 address at the University of Capetown, in which he said that the world "demands the qualities of youth: not a time of life but a state of mind, a temper of the will.") Like Bobby Kennedy, Newsom sometimes makes decisions by responding to personal experience with sudden, almost religious conviction.

That's how he explains what happened in January, when he attended the State of the Union speech as Pelosi's guest and heard Bush propose the constitutional amendment that would "defend the sanctity of marriage" by banning gay unions. As Newsom recalls it, he thought, He's attacking my citizens. Although none of Newsom's twenty-one campaign position papers mentioned gay marriage, when he returned to San Francisco he told his aides that he wanted to begin marrying same-sex couples as soon as possible. Members of his staff, a number of whom are gay, argued against the idea. They pointed out that the issue would alienate his supporters and distract people from his focus on Bayview; and that national Democratic leaders who had campaigned for him would see it as a betrayal—an embarrassment to the Party in an election year. Only Michael Farrah, Newsom's senior adviser and a groomsman at his wedding, kept quiet. When someone asked him why, he said, "Because the Mayor has already made up his mind."

Pelosi, Feinstein, and Boxer strongly reinforced the aides' warnings. Pelosi says she told Newsom that Democrats had been working for more than two years on stopping the constitutional amendment, "and we don't want outside interventions that could change the dynamic." Another prominent Democrat said to the Mayor, "Are you on the payroll of Karl Rove?"

The Mayor and his advisers chose Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon, lesbian activists who had been together for fifty-one years, to be the first couple married at City Hall, on February 12th. A photograph of them in tears, leaning their heads together after being pronounced "spouses for life," appeared on the front page of the *Chronicle* and was picked up around the country; the image of the event became the event. "We wanted to make it about the people," Peter Ragone, Newsom's press secretary, says, "not let it be the usual 'B roll' of two gay men in the Castro with their hands in each other's chaps." Newsom



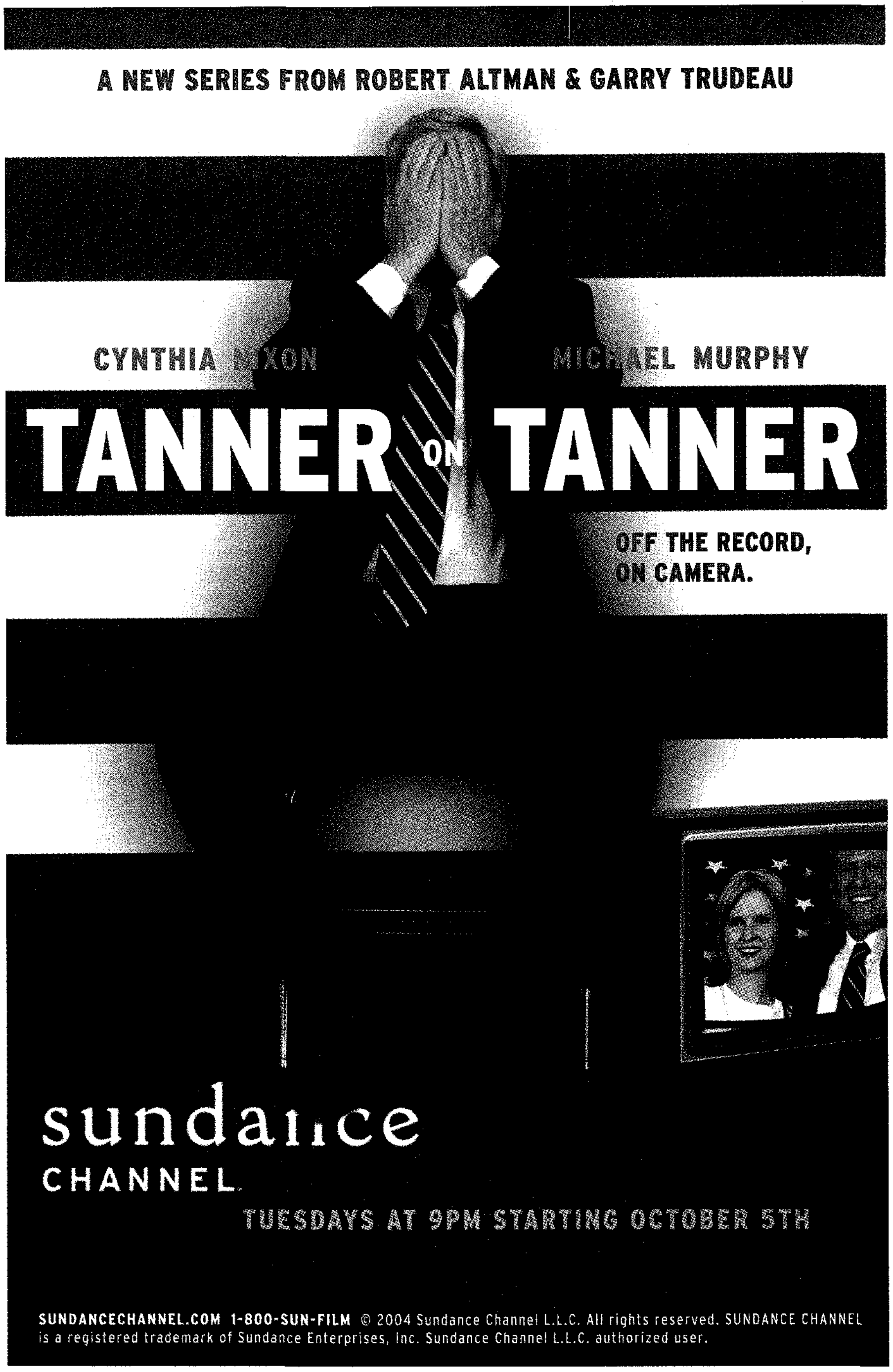
VEGAN INSOMNIA

didn't perform the ceremony himself, saying that he shouldn't be the focus, but the following day he did privately officiate at the marriages of his chief of staff and his director of public policy. The Mayor encouraged his brother-in-law, a filmmaker named Geoff Callan, to film staff meetings during this period; "Rush to the Civil Altar" should be out next year.

Some saw Newsom's initiative as a shrewd tactic. "He had to come up with something to win back the left, otherwise he'd spend the next four years fighting off recall petitions," one Democratic veteran told me. But the prevailing view was that authorizing gay marriage was the opposite of a tactical move. "In any civil-rights struggle, gains are made by spectacular boldness, and Newsom was spectacularly bold," Kate Kendell, the executive director of the National Center for Lesbian Rights, says.

The line of gay couples outside City Hall grew, and the local Cartier had to fly in additional wedding bands. Michael Farrah cancelled Valentine's Day plans that Saturday, and he and his girlfriend began performing weddings. "Everyone was crying," he says. "I was crying at the weddings of people I didn't even know. It was the most rewarding weekend I've had in ten years of working in government." As Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist inveighed against this "wildfire," and Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger warned that the situation could easily lead to violence, and "the next thing we know there is injured or there is dead people," Newsom's lead was peacefully followed in New Paltz, New York; Sandoval County, New Mexico; and Multnomah County, Oregon. In addition, since May thousands of court-sanctioned gay marriages have taken place in Massachusetts.

In less liberal precincts, however, Newsom became the object of enormous enmity. He received more than fourteen hundred death threats—for a time, his security detail grew to seven—and one privately commissioned poll found that, while he had instantly achieved the highest name recognition of any potential Democratic candidate for the 2006 California governor's race, a quarter of the state's Democratic voters had formed a negative opinion of him just as quickly. "To my base of support, it was just a hand grenade," Newsom told me. A half-dozen local pastors forbade Newsom to worship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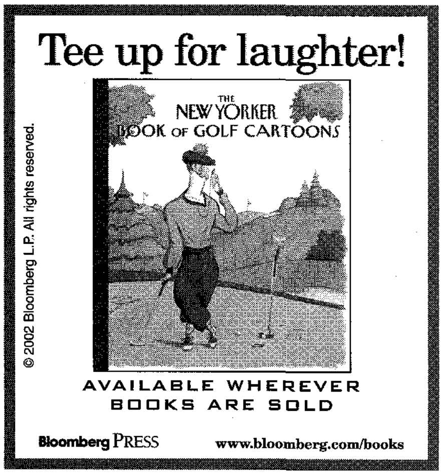
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in their churches, and at the annual Hibernian Newman Club St. Patrick's Day lunch, a gathering of the city's Irish Catholic élite, he heard boos. At the Convention in Boston in late July, everyone from the secretary of state of West Virginia to the winner of an MTV essay contest was given an opportunity to address the delegates—everyone except Newsom.

If there is an issue that polarizes San Francisco—a city that is equally proud of its liberalism and of its quality of life—it is what to do about the large homeless population, estimated at about eight thousand people; by my count one recent afternoon, there were thirty-three people living on United Nations Plaza within view of the mayor's office. The nearby fountain was blocked off because it had become a public toilet.

Newsom's leading issue as a mayoral candidate was a proposal to move the homeless into specialized single-room-occupancy hotels, where they would receive in-house jobs and addiction counselling but would have their cash benefits cut from a maximum of four hundred and ten dollars a month to between fifty-nine and ninety-seven dollars; furthermore, their stipends would be reduced even if they refused a room. His plan, called Care Not Cash, was reviled by the city's homeless advocates, a powerful constituency. Though programs to replace benefits with services are now standard in cities such as New York and Chicago, attempts to adopt such a measure in San Francisco had wrecked the careers of Art Agnos and Frank M. Jordan, one-term mayors who served, respectively, from 1988 to 1992 and from 1992 to 1996. Willie Brown avoided the problem by declaring that homelessness simply "may not be solvable."

Newsom decided to try. In 2002, after the plan was rejected by his fellow-supervisors, he managed to get a Care Not Cash proposition on the ballot, where it passed with sixty per cent of the vote. Many of the other mayoral candidates charged that Newsom was pandering to voters by, in effect, docking homeless people's stipends and then cutting off their traditional means of supplementing them. (Last fall, Newsom, as a supervisor, proposed a ballot measure that prohibited aggressive panhandling; it, too, passed with sixty per cent of the vote.)

When he was elected mayor, Newsom got a chance to test these initiatives against the realities of San Francisco life. One Sunday in April, he disguised himself by putting on a baseball cap and walked around the Tenderloin, the grimy district near City Hall where every doorway seems to house a dozing figure. The next day, in his office, he threw a world-class tantrum. Why am I seeing filth and open-air drug deals? he asked. Where are the street sweepers? Where are the police officers?

Newsom's tirade resulted in Tenderloin Scrubdown, a Department of Public Works initiative to flush the streets and sidewalks with water every day. But a few days before the May 3rd rollout of Care Not Cash two people from the Coalition on Homelessness showed up at 6 A.M. to film the operation. Trent Rhorer, the thirty-five-year-old executive director of the city's Department of Human Services, came to Room 200 that afternoon to warn the Mayor. "It's not going to play well," Rhorer said. "The D.P.W. guys were pretty firm: 'Wake up! It's cleaning time.' The point is it's a health hazard to have people lying in their own shit, but it's going to look like we were rousting homeless people under cover of darkness."

"The frustration of being mayor," Newsom said, "is that you can't control thirty thousand employees' activities seven days a week. Is it the big trucks or the mini pressure cleaners?"

"The big flushers."

"See, that's not the vision I had in mind," Newsom said. "Let's temper the big trucks dumping water—am I going to see video of homeless people getting drowned?"

Rhorer laughed.

"It's not funny," Newsom said.

"No," Rhorer said. "It's not funny."

Newsom put a finger to his temple and said, "No other major city in America hands out as much cash, which is why all the Bay Area homeless come here—San Mateo gives fifty-eight dollars, Alameda twenty-five, and Chicago gives *no* dollars—but all we're doing is reinforcing failure. . . . Check day is when drug dealers come to town, emergency rooms are overwhelmed, there's a precipitous drop in shelter use. It's a vicious cycle of despair—a hundred and sixty-nine homeless people died in this city last year. . . . The work requirement is nothing—you can work at the Coalition

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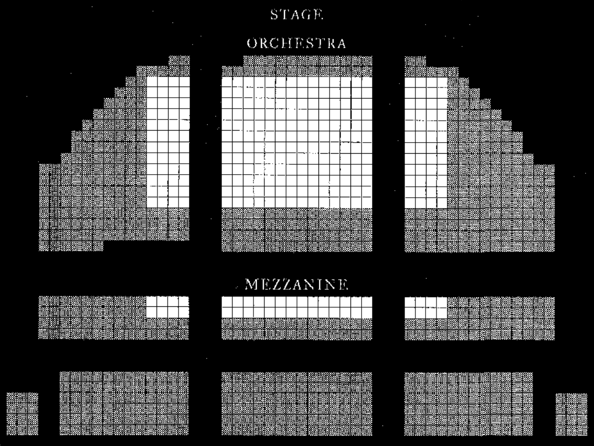

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on Homelessness, protesting the same people who are giving you money—"

"Do you know how many times I've heard this spiel?" Rhorer said, good-naturedly.

"We have two hundred and ninety-nine beds that open up for homeless people on Monday, with counselling, the part I'm so proud of," Newsom continued, "and we'll have nine hundred and forty by the end of the year. I'd like to get that up to a thousand, by the way, Trent." He had been slumped with fatigue when Rhorer arrived, but now he was ripping through his trademark semaphores: hands in front of his chest, gripping the problem as if it were a basketball; hands revolving around each other to underline the complexities; hands swivelling left and right to show options; finger pointed back at himself to indicate the tough decision and the criticism he would take; fingers steepled in front of his chest to announce his ability to sleep at night. "It's the one issue that's gotten me in trouble," he concluded, forgetting for the moment about all the other issues.

Some believe that Newsom is using Care Not Cash to advance his career. Supervisor Chris Daly, a former activist for the homeless, says, "Care Not Cash polled well, and that was the point where Gavin Newsom the supervisor became Gavin Newsom the mayoral candidate."

Newsom, who says, "There was no polling!," acts as if he can't quite believe that anyone would question his motives. He was pleased that his outreach to the city's poorest citizens seemed to be paying off—and also that more than two months had gone by without a gang killing (until one in late August). But he couldn't help revisiting what happened after he met privately with fifteen gang members, most of them from the Sunnydale projects.

"I've got my Ph.D. in homelessness and now I'm getting my Ph.D. in crime. I'm a sponge on this issue," Newsom told me. "But the community activists there—the same activists who walked with me through Sunnydale—are outraged because I'm meeting with the people directly. They say they're 'done with' me. I'm totally starting to get it, why things don't change. It's the death-by-a-thousand-cuts analogy. Like so many politicians, you find yourself thinking, I'm creating more enemies than friends! I'm going nowhere! Maybe I should just forget about it and run for reëlection!"

To Rhorer, Newsom now said, "The advocates say, 'You're taking money away from poor people.'"

"And choice," Rhorer said.

"Yeah, the paternalistic argument. But this is a choice I'm willing to make. You know, all the lawsuits and death threats and 'Don't show up at home' messages and the homeless-advocate people lighting couches on fire in front of my house—"

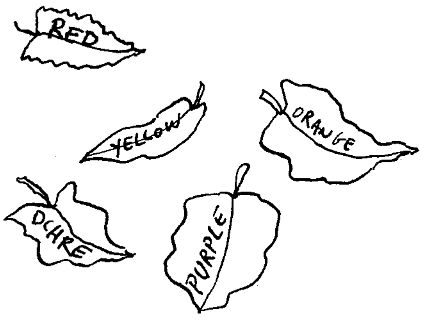
"In meetings I've been called 'motherfucker' and 'fag,'" Rhorer put in.

"Vicious, personal stuff—'How much did your wife pay for her wedding dress?'"

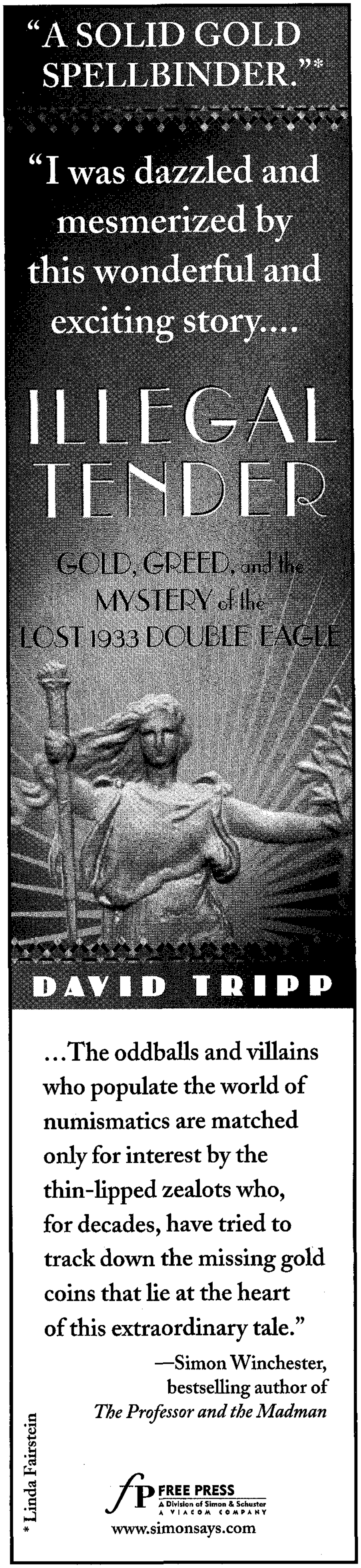
"'Nazi,'" Rhorer added, nostalgically.

"It's inevitable that someone will slip through the cracks and be out on the street, and then it'll be on the front page—but I don't want it to be inevitable!" Newsom cried. "Trent, don't let me down!"

A day later, Newsom had recovered his equipoise. When a *Chronicle* reporter told him that she was working on a story about the homeless in the Tenderloin, he predicted, "You're going to come back in a month and it's going to be"—he adopted the caramel tones of a local news correspondent—"'Neighbors said, "We were optimistic about the new mayor, but it's the same old story: promises not kept." The Mayor responds by saying, "We did our best, but budget problems prevented us from . . ." KRON 4 sent an undercover team, and *we* discovered . . .'" Newsom's aides were cracking up. He grinned, then added quietly, in his own voice, "Hey. All I can say is we're trying." In the months since then, the city's homeless caseload has dropped by almost fifty per cent—bearing out Newsom's argument and, for now, nearly silencing his critics.



Newsom's parents, Bill and Tessa, separated when he was two, and although they remained close friends, Gavin and Hilary grew up shuttling between their parents' worlds. A lawyer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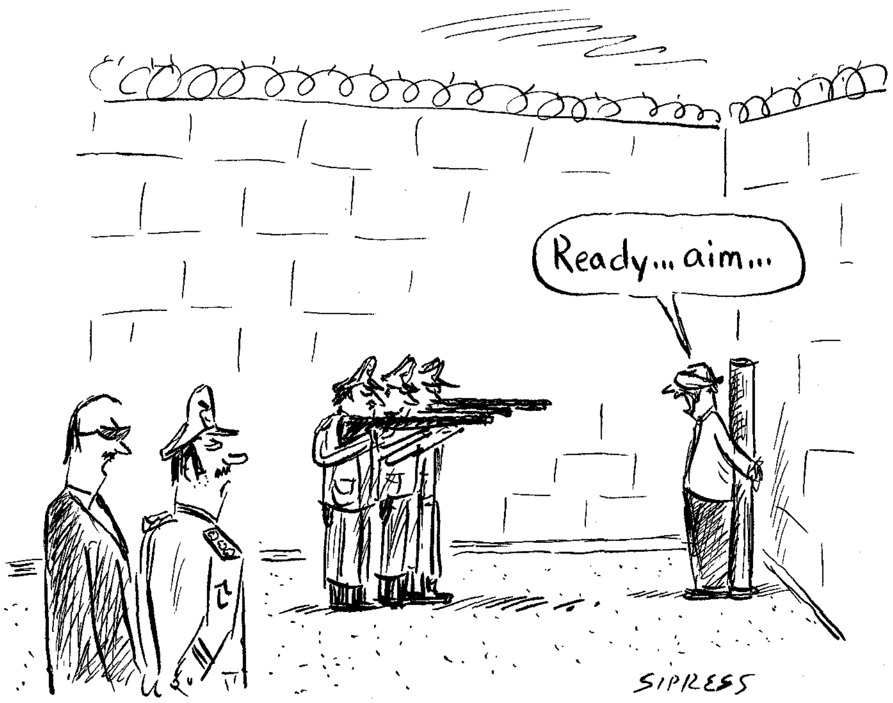

"He's a very controlling person."

• •

who always wished he'd become a poet, Bill Newsom ran losing campaigns for San Francisco supervisor and state senator and was later appointed to the state Court of Appeals by Governor Jerry Brown. "You were baptized a Democrat in my house," Bill Newsom told me. He recalls teasing his teen-age son, asking him, "Why are you so square? Why don't you use narcotics?"

Though he never earned more than sixty-five thousand dollars a year while his children were growing up, Newsom's father introduced Gavin to the allure of money by showing him what life was like among the Gettys. Bill Newsom got to know Gordon Getty and his brother, Paul, at St. Ignatius, a Catholic prep school, and he later became a trustee of Gordon's fortune. In 1973, Bill flew to Italy on the Getty family's behalf to deliver a three-million-dollar ransom to Calabrian mobsters in exchange for the return of Gordon's nephew, J. Paul Getty III.

Tessa Newsom, meanwhile, was holding three jobs to pay the rent, including taking shifts as a waitress at Ramona's, a Mexican restaurant where Gavin worked as a busboy. At home, Newsom says, "when I'd drop the garbage outside the door she would show me the right way of putting it inside the can and putting the lid on: 'Halfway is no way.' She'd say, 'It's not me serving you, young man—we're all in this family together.' "

When Newsom graduated from the Jesuit-run Santa Clara University, he told his father that he wanted to study law. Bill Newsom, worried that his son's dyslexia would hurt him in law school, and seeing that Gavin possessed both charm and a capacity for hard work, steered him toward business instead. With a hundred and seventy-four thousand dollars in seed money contributed by family friends, including fifteen thousand dollars invested by Gordon Getty, Newsom and Getty's son Billy opened the PlumpJack Wines shop in San Francisco's Cow Hollow. Newsom painted "Since 1992" on the side of the building when they opened, convinced that the store would endure until the date conveyed a sense of tradition. PlumpJack Group now manages ten other businesses. (On becoming mayor, Newsom sold his San Francisco-based holdings.)

Newsom's opponents have long portrayed him as "uncaring" and "out of touch"—political code words for "so much richer than you and me"—and a *Chronicle* investigation in early 2003 fuelled this impression when it revealed

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the extent of the Mayor's financial ties to Gordon Getty. The paper noted that Getty or his family had invested in ten of Newsom's eleven enterprises; that he owned forty-nine per cent of PlumpJack Group; that he had picked up the bill for Newsom's wedding reception, which came to two hundred and thirty thousand dollars; and that he had acted as Newsom's banker for more than $1.5 million in home mortgages. Even the name "PlumpJack" comes from an opera that Getty wrote. Yet Newsom is galled by the lingering belief, in some voters' minds, that he's simply a front man for Getty's interests. "That first business, it was me sweeping the sidewalk, me sacrificing everything and working seven days a week," he says. "My name is Newsom, not Getty."

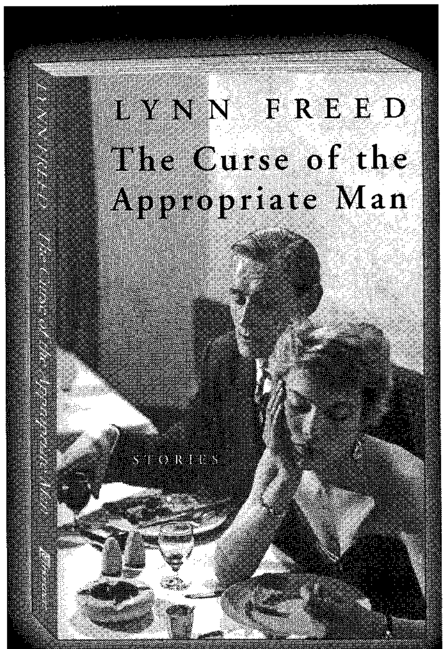
Neither of Newsom's parents wanted him to run for mayor. "My dad was worried I'd lose, and my mother was worried I'd win," Newsom says. In 2002, Tessa Newsom, although she was mortally ill with breast cancer, kept coaxing her son to redirect his mayoral ambitions into buying the *Marina Times*, a tiny San Francisco neighborhood paper. "She was concerned for my wife's and my relationship," Newsom says, "and even as I held her hand as she was taking her last breath . . ." He blinked, suddenly unable to speak.

"Gavin's mother was a strong woman and she lives inside of him," his aide Joyce Newstat says. "He's not threatened by powerful women—he prefers them to men." Newsom and Kimberly Guilfoyle met at the PlumpJack Café at a political event for State Senator John Burton, and began dating, in 2000, after she wrote him a five-hundred-dollar check for his re-election campaign as a supervisor and he replied with a warm thank-you note. Her job at Court TV requires her to live in New York (she flies home every other weekend), and inevitably the couple is the focus of intense local gossip, which Guilfoyle Newsom likens to the speculation surrounding Brad Pitt and Jennifer Aniston. Although Guilfoyle Newsom was one of the prosecutors who won a conviction in San Francisco's notorious 2002 dog-mauling murder case, people often prefer to talk about her stint as a lingerie model—just as they find her husband's ideas about urban renewal less worthy of discussion than the tidbit that he once dated Jewel. The photo spread accompanying the *Harper's Bazaar* article—the Newsoms posed in evening wear, lolling on Gordon Getty's rug—did little to allay the perception that the couple enjoy the spectacle of their success.

Guilfoyle Newsom rounds on anyone who slights her husband or questions their long-distance relationship—"How's *your* marriage?" she'll say. For his part, Newsom tapes her show, freezes on rookie-mistake moments, and points them out to her: "Too much smile there," he might say. Last year, he urged her to run for district attorney, and she replied, "They'll say, 'Wait a second—too much power on one mattress.'" He said, "If you wanted to run, I wouldn't." "I said, 'No, you do it,'" Guilfoyle Newsom told me, quickly adding, "I would never rule it out in the future."

Their home-and-job conflicts do take a toll. Guilfoyle Newsom says she has cooked dinner for her husband three times, and each time she wound up alone with cold food. They sold their house in Pacific Heights in January, but haven't had time to find a new one, so Newsom lives in a sublet apartment, in which the only individual touches are his suits and ties, his briefcase, his cell phone and charger, and a few bottles of Orangina. "He isn't going to have a personal life," Guilfoyle Newsom says with a rueful smile. "If San Francisco were a woman, he would have married her."

Although Newsom prides himself on bringing about dramatic change, the truth is that his battles may not be resolved for years, after they have wended their way through the courts. The state Supreme Court ruling on the city's gay marriages was a sharp setback, although Newsom insists that he had expected it. At his direction, San Francisco had already filed a lawsuit claiming that the California statute prohibiting gay marriage is unconstitutional; the question will probably reach the state Supreme Court in about eighteen months. Having pored over the justices' earlier rulings, Newsom told me, "I am convinced that we will prevail by a four-to-three decision—I feel very confident." In the meantime, he has written fund-raising letters for a campaign by California Assemblyman Mark Leno to introduce legislation, this



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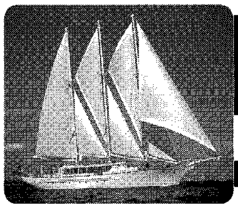
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December, authorizing gay marriage. Although neither effort is assured of success, when it comes to social attitudes time appears to be on Newsom's side. "I fully expect gay marriage will be accepted in California in ten to fifteen years, just on the replacement of age cohorts," Mark DiCamillo, the director of the state's Field poll, says.

If Newsom served two terms as mayor, he would be only forty-five, and might well then be seen as a pioneer by California—or even national—voters. In 1998, Newsom told the City Hall reporter Rachel Gordon, "If you're in politics and you want to make an impact, you should be as successful as possible, and the most influential position is President." Gordon says, "I got a call from his aide Mike Farrah afterward, saying, 'You're not going to use that, are you?' And Newsom has told me that that's a comment he still regrets making." She adds, "When he was a supervisor, he'd come down to the press room and shoot the breeze, talk about his dyslexia, about how his mom was dying. But he doesn't discuss his feelings anymore—he doesn't stray from message."

Recently, when Newsom was passing through a hallway lined with portraits of the forty-one mayors who preceded him, he suddenly stopped and pointed to Washington Bartlett, a mutton-chopped figure who was mayor from 1882 to 1886. "Who's this? Why was he important?" he asked a nearby intern, who froze. "I'm just kidding," Newsom said. "That's the thing about mayors—you go up on the wall and ten years later no one knows who you were."

One Saturday not long ago, I asked Newsom about his ambitions. I had spent the day with him in La Honda, about forty miles south of San Francisco. The city comptroller had suggested selling some land that the city owned there to help close the deficit, and Newsom wanted to see the parcel first. Instead, he spent his entire four-hour visit inspecting a city-run reform school on the land, and growing increasingly upset at its slovenly state and at his guide for the day, the city's chief juvenile probation officer, Gwendolyn Tucker. (In August, he announced that he was looking for Tucker's replacement.) After his driver returned him to City Hall, where he faced three hours of budget meetings, Newsom sat for a moment in the back seat and, in response to my question, said, "I've never for one second indulged in any consideration outside of being mayor." He grinned, and continued, "I have a hard time telling you this with a straight face. I would never believe me if I read this—I would go, 'That's bullshit.' "

Jerry Brown, the two-term California governor and former Presidential candidate who is now the mayor of Oakland, understands the temptations. "I used to say I'd serve one term," he told me recently. "We all say that. But you don't run unless you've got a lot of ambition, and the more you do it the less you can do without it. I'm sure Gavin has no limits to his ambition, and so you run until they throw you out or carry you out." Brown recently announced that he plans to run for state attorney general.

Newsom continued, "But I'll tell you, I think it would be interesting to announce that I will not run again, so that people will believe again in politicians and politics, will feel that this job matters, that it's not about me. I swear to you, I could give this job up easily. *Easily.* I think about owning a football team, about joining the Peace Corps to dig wells and educate in East Africa—even about working out every day so I could play one inning for the Giants. The reason I know there's life outside politics is because I've seen what life inside politics is like, and it ain't—why am I saying 'ain't'? Got to work on that—it's just not all it's cracked up to be. I can't keep up the pace. I don't have time to read. Last night I ate takeout lamb shank so late I couldn't even get to sleep. Politics is life-consuming, but it's not a life."

After a moment, he went on: "Then yesterday, when all my staff were in a room, I thought, But if I quit, what happens to these guys? They're all fired. And if you quit you're a lame duck, so you want to be reëlected to be able to use your leverage to get things done, that's true. That's true." Newsom continued the debate internally for a while, then rolled down the window and seemed to enjoy the thump of a rock band that was playing on the plaza opposite City Hall. A suspiciously serene rally in favor of legalizing marijuana was going on, and the air was suddenly pungent with the substance in question. "Isn't this great?" he said. "I love this city!" ♦

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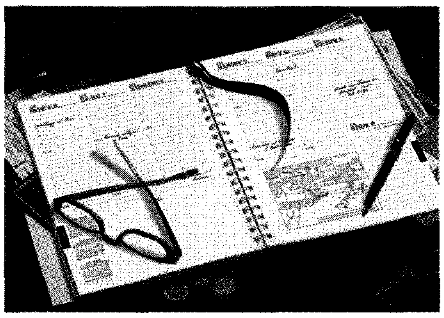

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RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

BY CHRISTOPHER BUCKLEY

> At no time during these debates shall either candidate move from their designated area behind their respective podiums.
>
> —*From the agreement worked out for the Presidential debates.*

Paragraph Two: Dress.

Candidates shall wear business attire. At no time during the debates shall either candidate remove any article of clothing, such as tie, belt, socks, suspenders, etc. Candidates shall not wear helmets, padding, girdles, prosthetic devices, or "elevator"-type shoes. Per above, candidates shall not remove shoes or throw same at each other during debate. Once a debate is concluded, candidates shall be permitted to toss articles of clothing, excepting underwear, into the audience for keepsake purposes.

Paragraph Six: Hand gestures.

"Italian," "French," "Latino," "Bulgarian," or other ethnic-style gestures intended to demean, impugn, or otherwise derogate opponent by casting aspersions on opponent's manhood, abilities as lover, or cuckold status are prohibited. Standard "American"-style gestures meant to convey honest bewilderment, doubt, etc., shall be permitted. Candidates shall not point rotating index fingers at their own temples to imply that opponent is mentally deranged. Candidates shall at no time insert fingers in their own throats to signify urge to vomit. Candidates shall under no circumstances insert fingers into opponent's throat.

Paragraph Seventeen A: Bodily fluids—Perspiration.

Debate sponsors shall make every effort to maintain comfortable temperature onstage. Candidates shall make reasonable use of underarm deodorant and other antiperspirant measures, subject to review by Secret Service, before the debates. In the event that perspiration is unavoidable, candidates may deploy one plain white cotton handkerchief measuring eight inches square. Handkerchief may not be used to suggest that opponent wants to surrender in global war on terrorism.

Paragraph Forty-two: Language.

Candidates shall address each other in terms of mutual respect ("Mr. President," "Senator," etc.). Use of endearing modifiers ("my distinguished opponent," "the honorable gentleman," "Pookie," "Diddums," etc.) is permitted. The following terms are specifically forbidden and may not be used until after each debate is formally concluded: "girlie-man," "draft dodger," "drunk," "ignoramus," "Jesus freak," "frog," "bozo," "wimp," "toad," "lickspittle," "rat bastard," "polluting bastard," "lying bastard," "demon spawn," "archfiend," or compound nouns ending in "-hole" or "-ucker."

Paragraph Fifty-eight: Spousal references.

Each candidate may make one reference to his spouse. All references to consist of boilerplate praise, e.g., "I would not be standing here without [spouse's first name]" or "[Spouse's name] would make a magnificent First Lady." Candidates shall not pose hypothetical scenarios involving violent rape or murder of opponent's spouse so as to taunt opponent with respect to his views on the death penalty.

Paragraph Ninety-eight: Vietnam.

Neither candidate shall mention the word "Vietnam." In the event that either candidate utters said word in the course of a debate, the debate shall be concluded immediately and declared forfeit to the third-party candidate. ♦

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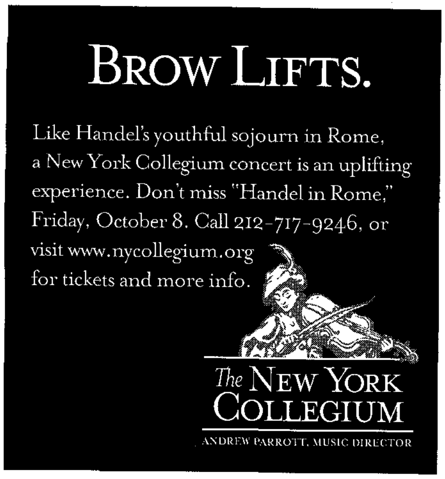

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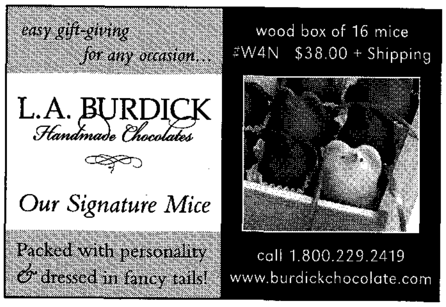

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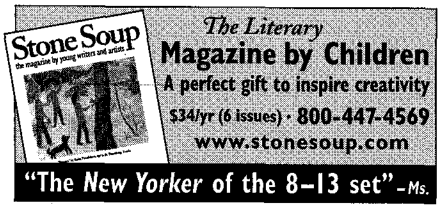

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ANNALS OF AERONAUTICS

THE X PRIZE

Competing in the entrepreneurial space race.

BY IAN PARKER

About six years ago, not long after Burt Rutan, an aircraft designer, had begun to think seriously of building a plane that could leave the Earth's atmosphere, he woke up at his desert home, a few miles outside the town of Mojave, California, and said, "I've got an idea." As Rutan's wife, Tonya, recently recalled, "We had been dead asleep—it was three in the morning. He ran to the bathroom with a sketchpad, came out waving a sheet of paper, and said, 'I know how to configure the spaceship! A shuttlecock.' " Her husband, she said, was "real close to my face, looking right in my eyes." Burt asked Tonya to think of the way a badminton shuttlecock falls: how it always falls in the same position, and falls slowly, its feathers causing drag. That would be a smart way, he said, to return a small spaceship safely to Earth. The couple went back to sleep, and Burt, who often starts the day by singing James Brown's "I Feel Good," woke in high spirits.

I was eating lunch with Tonya, a slightly built and pretty woman in her early forties, in the Voyager restaurant, which is attached to Mojave's airport. "See those mountains? We're cut off from the world," she said, nodding toward the nearby Tehachapi range. She said that she would prefer to live in a more cosmopolitan place, adding, "Fortunately, we get to travel a lot." Her home town is a line of gas stations and fast-food restaurants along a hot, flat desert-valley floor a hundred or so miles north of Los Angeles. A new bypass has taken business away from the town; the local Wendy's closed last spring. A resident described Mojave as the kind of place where, if you were driving late at night across country, "your wife would look around and wouldn't let you stop."

But in Mojave the sky is almost always clear. At night, the Milky Way is milky, and it rains only about a dozen days a year. Despite an insistent northwesterly wind that keeps windmill turbines turning on the surrounding mountain ridges, this is a good place to fly. An airport was built in Mojave in 1935; during the Second World War, the Marines took it over. It became a quiet civilian airport in 1961; eleven years later, it was reorganized as the East Kern Airport District, and local farmers occasionally leased space between the runways to dry fruit. It's a frontier-spirit place, perfect for training test pilots, or keeping a privately owned MIG fighter plane.

The view from the restaurant was of two hundred or so commercial jets sitting in the dry air, waiting for an international economic upturn; the airlines use Mojave for long-term parking. The only movement was that of a man riding an undersized bicycle up and down the airport apron. But a videotape running in a continuous, silent loop on a television monitor on the wall pointed to activity inside the hangars and workshops on the airport's grounds: privately funded research into space travel. The film showed a spindly-winged white plane waiting on the runway, with a smaller, stubbier plane slung beneath it, like a missile. They took off; the film then showed a vertical vapor trail streaking way overhead, a thin white line. After this, the smaller plane returned, and Burt Rutan, waiting on the tarmac in jeans and a mustard-colored polo shirt, hugged the pilot, who had just become an astronaut. This preliminary flight, which took place in June, will be repeated on September 29th—this time with ballast equal to the weight of two passengers. Space tourism is about to receive its first official test.

When Dick Rutan, Burt's older brother by five years, crashed his model aircraft as a child, Burt would fix them, and make them his own. Burt, who is sixty-one years old, spent much of his childhood, in the central California town of Dinuba, building spectacular, award-winning airplanes. Dick went on to join the Air Force. Burt flew solo on his sixteenth birthday, took a degree in aeronautical engineering at California Polytechnic State University, in San Luis Obispo, and then, in his twenties, worked as a civilian flight-test engineer at Edwards Air Force Base, close to Mojave. (In one of the audiocassettes he sent home in place of letters during this time, he said, "I really want to make something of myself in aviation. . . . I want to make it before I get too old. I want to get there quick.") He married in 1962, had two children, and divorced not long afterward. He later said, jokingly, that he saw a choice between his wife and the plane he was then building, and "it was an easy decision to make."

Rutan moved to Mojave in 1974. By that time, forty-eight Americans had been to space, and twelve had walked on the moon; Pan Am had placed more than ninety thousand names on a waiting list for future scheduled moon landings, and President Nixon had announced a program to build reusable shuttles that would have the effect of "routinizing" space travel. Rutan, then thirty-one, was confident that before he died he would fly into space.

He went into the hobbyist business, designing avant-garde airplanes and selling the plans (at about a hundred and thirty dollars each) to amateur enthusiasts with large suburban garages. The planes tended to be canards, which have two sets of wings—one small set in front of the other—making them almost impossible to stall. They were designed to be built from light, strong, composite materials—layers of fibreglass and epoxy, for example—rather than wood or metal. With the success of his awkwardly named VariEze ("very easy") and Long-EZ aircraft, Rutan became a revered figure in the "home-build" community. "Rutan is God," one hobbyist wrote.

In the Mojave Desert, space tourism is about to receive its first official test.

JOOST SWARTE

In 1982, Rutan formed a company, Scaled Composites, that produced single-prototype aircraft for commercial and military clients. Four years later, he became known internationally when he designed Voyager, an aircraft with a wingspan of a hundred and eleven feet, which was built to fly around the world on a single tank of fuel without stopping—something that had never been done before. Voyager's pilot was Dick Rutan, who had moved to Mojave after retiring from the Air Force; he had flown more than three hundred combat missions in Vietnam. While Burt was intense and self-contained, occupied by his private world of aeronautical invention, Dick was social and self-confident. ("I'm the world's greatest pilot," Dick told me, when I met him at the Denny's in Mojave. "I'm the right stuff. I am!") The brothers frequently fought. Dick Rutan still sounds peeved, if also amused, when he recalls Burt's reluctance to install radar in Voyager: "He thought it was just some froufrou thing that I wanted." Burt was more attuned to what a plane needed to fly than to what a pilot needed to survive the flight. "Burt doesn't always understand the human element in design," Dick said. Voyager was difficult to fly, and came close to killing him a number of times—first on takeoff, when its fuel-filled wings bent so far as to touch the ground—but in December, 1986, it made a precarious twenty-five-thousand-mile flight, in nine days. It is now displayed at the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum, in Washington, D.C. Ronald Reagan presented the Rutan brothers with the Presidential Citizen's Medal.

By the time Rutan reached his fiftieth birthday, in 1993, the prospects for everyday manned space flight and a station on the moon—not to mention a manned voyage to Mars—were no closer than they had been twenty years before. The future had stalled; the Space Shuttle—sold to the country as an exercise in thrift—had turned out to be expensive and fatally unsafe.

Spurred by grievance and by some refinement of the feeling that inspires middle-aged men to buy Ferraris, Rutan began to make sketches of a vehicle that he hoped would be capable of reaching a hundred kilometres, or just over sixty-two miles, above sea level—before quickly dropping back, like a flying fish, pulled by gravity. (In the mid-nineteen-fifties, the World Air Sports Federation had defined this altitude as the beginning of space.) Rutan was not imagining an orbital craft, which would need to reach far greater speeds, and would require many times the level of investment; rather, he was aiming to reproduce the parabolic suborbital flight made by America's first astronaut, Alan Shepard, who spent fifteen minutes above the Earth's atmosphere in a Mercury capsule in May, 1961. Rutan saw an opportunity to become the person who opened up space. "It became very clear that if the little guy didn't do it, it wasn't going to be done at all," he said.

An alternative space community—predominantly libertarian in spirit, and sometimes Vulcan in its wardrobe—had been pressing since the late nineteen-seventies for an end to NASA's historical monopoly on American spaceflight. That case was reinforced by the destruction of the Challenger shuttle, in 1986. Even those who had once been inspired by NASA began to see the agency's early achievements as disguised disappointments. "The American space program was, for all practical purposes, an attempt

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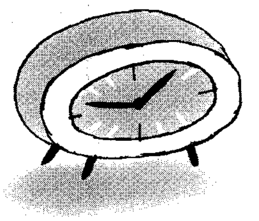
to show the Russians that we could do Communism better than they could," Jeff Greason, the president of XCOR, a Mojave-based rocket-plane company, said recently. "I'm not sorry we went to the moon, but there's very little doubt in my mind that had Apollo never existed we would be further along today than we are." In pursuing grandiose projects, he said, NASA overlooked more practical approaches to space travel.

By the mid-nineteen-nineties, more than a hundred civilian satellites had been put in orbit, and the idea of private rockets launching new satellites into space began to seem a realistic business proposition. At about the same time, the wilder idea of entrepreneurial manned space travel started to migrate out of science fiction. Some of those in the generation of cheated Americans—who had regarded the space race as a private invitation to the moon, then seen the party cancelled—began to acquire great personal fortunes, allowing the alternative-space rhetoric to be backed by capital. As Elon Musk, who sold PayPal to eBay for one and a half billion dollars in 2002, and who now runs SpaceX, a rocket company near the Los Angeles International Airport, recently described it, "You had to have some kind of pre-boom to supply the capital to get the rocket boom going, and that only happened with personal computers and the Internet."

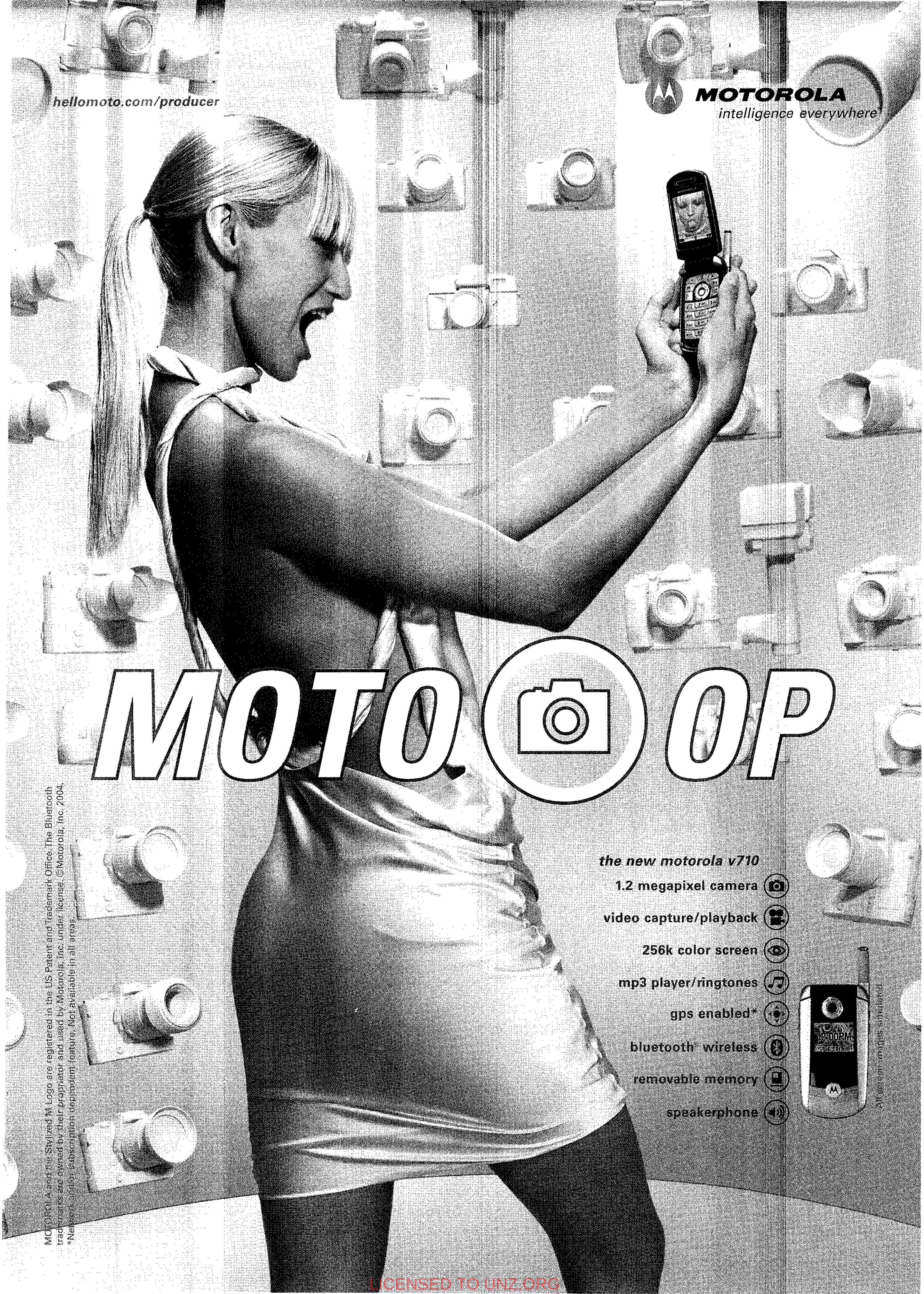
In 1996, Peter Diamandis, a St. Louis entrepreneur and space enthusiast, founded the X Prize, which was designed to induce an age of space tourism. Diamandis modelled his prize on the twenty-five-thousand-dollar Orteig Prize, which was won by Charles Lindbergh for the first transatlantic flight, in 1927. The X Prize (in the aeronautical tradition, the letter "X" indicates "exploration" and "experimental") promised ten million dollars to the first privately financed team to take three people to the threshold of space and back, twice in two weeks. The second trip would prove the spaceship's reusability.



Around this time, Burt Rutan met Paul Allen, the co-founder of Microsoft. Today, Allen is ranked by *Forbes* as the third-wealthiest man in the world. (He recently spent part of his twenty-one-billion-dollar fortune to found a Science Fiction Museum in Seattle that contains, among other exhibits, the captain's chair from the set of "Star Trek.") Rutan told Allen of his plans for a rocket-powered plane and showed him some sketches. Allen was impressed, and they agreed to speak again.

A rocket is a bomb that explodes neatly, and to deliver someone into suborbital space is neither easy nor safe; fourteen people have died on space-bound rockets since 1960. But Rutan saw the greater challenge as bringing his spaceship back to Earth. As a spaceship reënters the atmosphere, and begins to encounter air of increasing density, it must maintain a precise trajectory, or it risks breaking apart. At first, Rutan pictured a capsule that returned under a parachute, as in the Apollo and Soyuz programs. But, to an aeronautical expert, this method was unappealing, and Rutan began to envision his spacecraft flying back to Earth, not falling. By 1999, Rutan's thoughts had turned to a concept close to that of the X-15—the black, winged, experimental American rocket plane of the nineteen-fifties and sixties that was launched at forty-five thousand feet from a modified bomber plane, rather than starting its flight from the ground. This high-altitude takeoff allowed the X-15 to carry fifty per cent less fuel. From 1959 to 1968, when the program ended, the X-15 took eight pilots above fifty miles, which is the Air Force's designated start of space. In the opinion of many experts, the X-15 represented a future of elegant, low-cost, reusable spacecraft that was sidelined by America's investment in Apollo, which in today's terms amounted to about a hundred billion dollars.

The X-15 showed that it was possible to land a rocket plane on the ground. But a computer system was often used to fly the plane at the precise angle to reënter the atmosphere safely. Rutan did not want the weight, the expense, and the complication of that kind of system. (His brother had, after all, barely won the argument about the need for radar on Voyager.) It was at this stage that Rutan thought of badminton—and of the idea of a shuttlecock and what he calls "feathered" wings. A spaceship could have the wings needed to land on the ground, but



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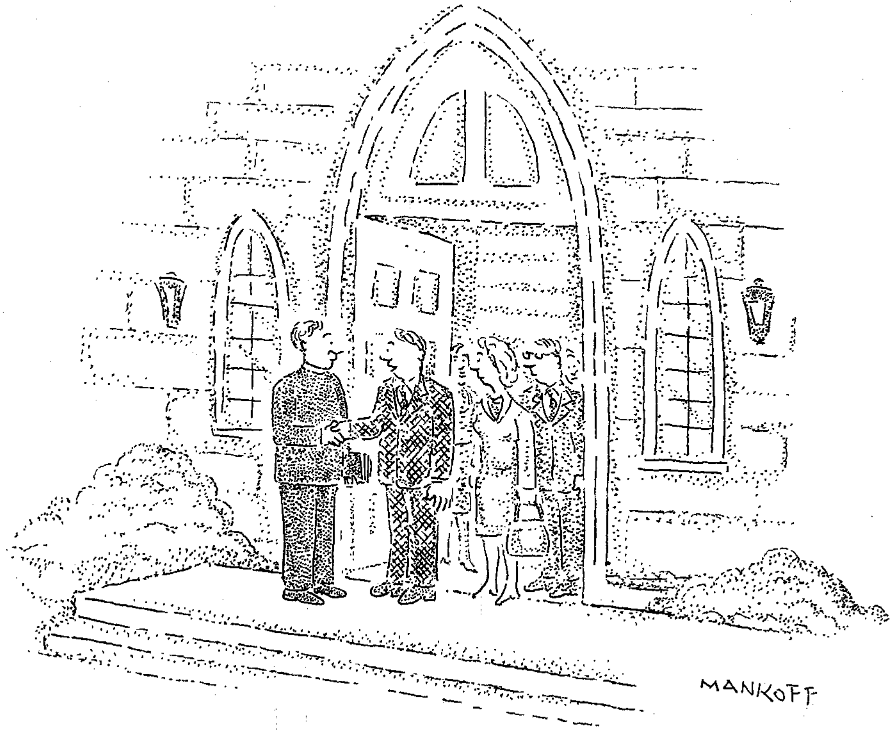

"Oh, I know He works in mysterious ways, but if I worked that mysteriously I'd get fired."

• •

they could be hinged, and rotate, like oversized air flaps: this would cause drag, the way the feathers on a shuttlecock do, and would set the craft at a stable, belly-first angle on reëntry.

In 2001, Rutan signed a contract with Paul Allen, agreeing to a budget that has been estimated at about twenty million dollars. Rutan had not initially been inspired by the X Prize. Neither was Allen, according to Rutan: "If you see how rich he is, Paul Allen wouldn't do it to try to win ten million." But the prize was there—at least until the end of 2004, when a policy that underwrote the contest would expire—and it would have been foolish to ignore it. So Rutan's designs included seating for three—a pilot and two passengers—as the X Prize required. "I had confidence," he said. "I just marched along at the rate I felt I could do it, not really worried about the competition. And, fortunately, there hasn't been a lot of competition."

By this summer, twenty-seven teams had registered for what is now known, because of sponsorship, as the Ansari X Prize. Nineteen of the teams were from the United States, and the rest were from Argentina, Canada, Israel, Romania, Russia, and Great Britain. Many teams had Web sites showing handsome vehicles far above the Earth: the sky black behind them, the horizon curved, the oceans a lovely blue. Only a few of the competitors had been able to take their adventures further than these hopeful illustrations.

While the Orteig Prize had marked a clear aeronautical milestone, the X Prize, if awarded, would primarily celebrate a moment of economic confidence. In terms of space exploration, Yuri Gagarin's Earth orbit in 1961 was a greater achievement than any X Prize suborbital flight; and the prize's requirement of reusability had been met by the Space Shuttle in the early nineteen-eighties. The X Prize wasn't only about getting people in and out of space; it was about a new way of spending unusual quantities of private money. It championed extravagance; and, in doing so, it demanded unlikely relationships. It called for nongovernmental finance: engineers had to find angel investors, or investors had to find engineers.

In Texas, John Carmack, who amassed a fortune writing video games like Doom and Quake, began developing Black Armadillo, a cone-nosed cylindrical spaceship that, at journey's end, would turn itself around, nose up, then gently settle to Earth using downward thrust. And, this summer, a Canadian team, da Vinci, that had long struggled to finance a project designed to launch a rocket at seventy-one thousand feet from beneath a hot-air balloon, found funding from an Internet casino known for sponsoring promotional streakers at sporting events. Brian Feeney, da Vinci's founder, has agreed in return to play online casino games on a laptop computer in space.

While a dozen or so teams have devised potentially plausible technological plans, far fewer have had the funds to follow up on them. The level of these financial difficulties is suggested by a recent press release from the young team of Space Transport Corporation, in Forks, Washington: "The latest proud S.T.C. sponsor is the Forks Coffee Shop in downtown Forks."

Interorbital Systems, run by Rod and Randa Milliron out of an unmarked building at the Mojave airport, is also severely underfinanced. Rod is a rocket engineer who once worked for Grumman Aerospace, on Long Island. The Millirons dress in black, and they maintain a long-standing interest in electronic music. They spend part of their time in Hollywood, appearing as extras in movies and on television: Rod has a recurring nonspeaking role as a counter-terrorism agent on "24." When they're in Mojave, they work on designs for space-faring vehicles. In a conservative town—a sign outside the local liquor store reads "Ice and Ammo"—the Millirons are unsettling neighbors. "If aliens came down to Earth and were looking for company, I think they'd like to meet Rod and Randa," Dick Rutan told me.

"We like to say we're the most hated X Prize team," Randa Milliron said.

Interorbital plans to build a hundred-and-fifteen-foot rocket, which would be launched from a site that the Millirons have examined on Tonga, in the South Pacific. The rocket's capsule would return to Earth by parachute. The Millirons are impatient with the idea of putting wings on a spaceship: a wing serves no purpose in a place without air, and it is bound to add weight. In the opinion of the Millirons, Burt Rutan's winged design is undermined by the fact that it does not point the way to orbital flight: they say it could never be sufficiently modified and powered to take part in the next stage of the private space race (a claim that Rutan disputes). "Orbital is where the money is going to be made," Randa Milliron told me when we met. In fact, this summer, Interorbital was no longer actively planning for an X Prize attempt—although a Rutan setback, and the sudden appearance of a wealthy investor, could bring the Millirons back in. Rather, they were concentrating on their interest in sending tourists into orbit, and, in time, building a private space station. A full program would require an investment of thirty-five million dollars. Randa said that when she and her husband meet other X Prize competitors they are struck by the fact that "they seem to be more into winning a prize than travelling in space. I haven't met too many competitors who are interested in setting up a colony on the moon."

The Millirons consider Rutan to be a man for whom a short journey matters more than any dream of arrival. They are also highly suspicious of Rutan's X Prize progress. "It could all be preprogrammed to be a success, whatever happened," they told me, suggesting that one test flight by Rutan's team might not have achieved the height claimed for it. Rutan says of some of his competitors, whom he never refers to by name, "They start with a little bit of money hoping they'll make progress, and then they find themselves doing stunts instead of research flight tests. They beg for more money instead of putting their nose to the grindstone."

To speak with apparent certainty, as the Millirons do, of vacationing in a space hotel is to show extreme optimism in one of two areas: either in the speed at which the private space industry will mature or in the chances that one will live a very, very long time. The Millirons do have some more modest technological plans: they have built and test-fired engines for rockets intended to launch small satellites, for example. But they also claim to follow a regimen of diet and exercise dictated by their desire to undertake future space travel (a regimen that, unconventionally, includes milkshakes), and they allow themselves to be drawn into conversations about space etiquette: the wisdom of keeping goats in orbit, say, or making Venus habitable by forcing a greenhouse effect upon it. At such times, they risk sounding like a fringe Presidential candidate musing on possible curtain colors for the Lincoln Bedroom.

Rutan's company, Scaled Composites, leases buildings a hundred yards from Interorbital. A drab, light-industrial corridor leads past a number of glossy paintings that portray all of Rutan's aircraft flying in formation over lush landscapes. Beyond the coffee station and the cut-out "Dilbert" cartoons, a door opens onto a twenty-two-foot-high hangar where, on a recent visit, Rutan showed me SpaceShipOne, his X Prize competitor. It looked as playful as a Philippe Starck hair dryer, and as flimsy as a fibreglass canoe. One would feel nervous driving it around the corner to the airport restaurant, for

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fear of running into a jackrabbit. About thirty feet long, it looked like the scale model for something much larger, sturdier, and more intergalactic. SpaceShipOne was recognizably a plane—a white tapered tube with wings, and an undercarriage, parked parallel to the ground—but the wings were hinged, and the small cabin space, where the tube narrowed, then came to a point, had a dozen portholes at different heights in the place of a windshield. The flight deck featured a single computer screen. The pilot's controls were a stick and two foot pedals. The interior had an unpolished, home-built feel, and smelled of carbon.

Rutan showed me a Ping-Pong ball decorated with hand-drawn happy faces which hung from above the pilot's head; when the string is no longer taut, the pilot is weightless. "You don't fly the Space Shuttle to orbit," he said. "The pilot sits there and the *computer* flies it. They don't trust the pilot to fly it. If space is going to be cheap, it has to be stick-and-rudder."

On the morning of June 21, 2004, a year behind schedule, and after fourteen test flights that had stayed mostly below twenty miles, Mike Melvill, sixty-three, an old friend of Rutan's, and "the best stick-and-rudder guy" he knows (a "steely-eyed, hairy-chested test pilot," in the words of Tonya Rutan), strapped himself into the pilot's seat in SpaceShipOne, with a parachute on his back. Melvill had flown SpaceShipOne nearly a dozen times, but this would be the first flight to aim for space, and the last test before a formal attempt at the X Prize. At 6:47 A.M., White Knight, another Rutan design, with long skinny wings, lifted SpaceShipOne from the runway. An hour later, the twinned planes were at forty-seven thousand feet. White Knight's flight-test engineer pulled the handle that released SpaceShipOne, and Melvill glided for a few seconds, alone. He then ignited the rocket engine—burning a mixture of liquid nitrous oxide and rubber—and within ten seconds SpaceShipOne was moving upward faster than the speed of sound.

Rutan later acknowledged that he had considered the risks of producing a "smoking hole" on the desert floor. "I'd have lost a friend. You could say, 'I should pick a pilot who I'm less friendly with, a guy who's a stranger to me and just working for me, so if he gets killed . . .' " He smiled. "You could say, 'Let's have a lawyer fly it' "—a pause—" 'or a liberal.' Mike's a conservative and a good friend, so that's the highest risk I can take." Dick Rutan, who would gladly train to pilot SpaceShipOne, said, "It worries me, what Burt would go through, if something terrible happened. I worry that he's too confident. It might totally destroy him."

Alan Bond, a leading British rocket engineer and the head of Reaction Engines, recently told me that it would take a shotgun to get him to ride on SpaceShipOne. He fears that the X Prize will discredit the entrepreneurial space race if contestants die on CNN, live. "When these people do kill themselves, which they surely will, in large numbers, then companies like mine, which look to governments to support them, we'll suffer," he said. Bond has calculated that an amateur spaceflight costing ten million dollars—the kind of money an X Prize competitor might hope to have—would carry a high risk of disaster. He made the calculation by determining the current cost of designing, building, and exhaustively testing a vehicle like the X-15: $1.3 billion. "So what can you do with only ten million? You can work out what the failure probability is, and it comes out at thirty to forty per cent."

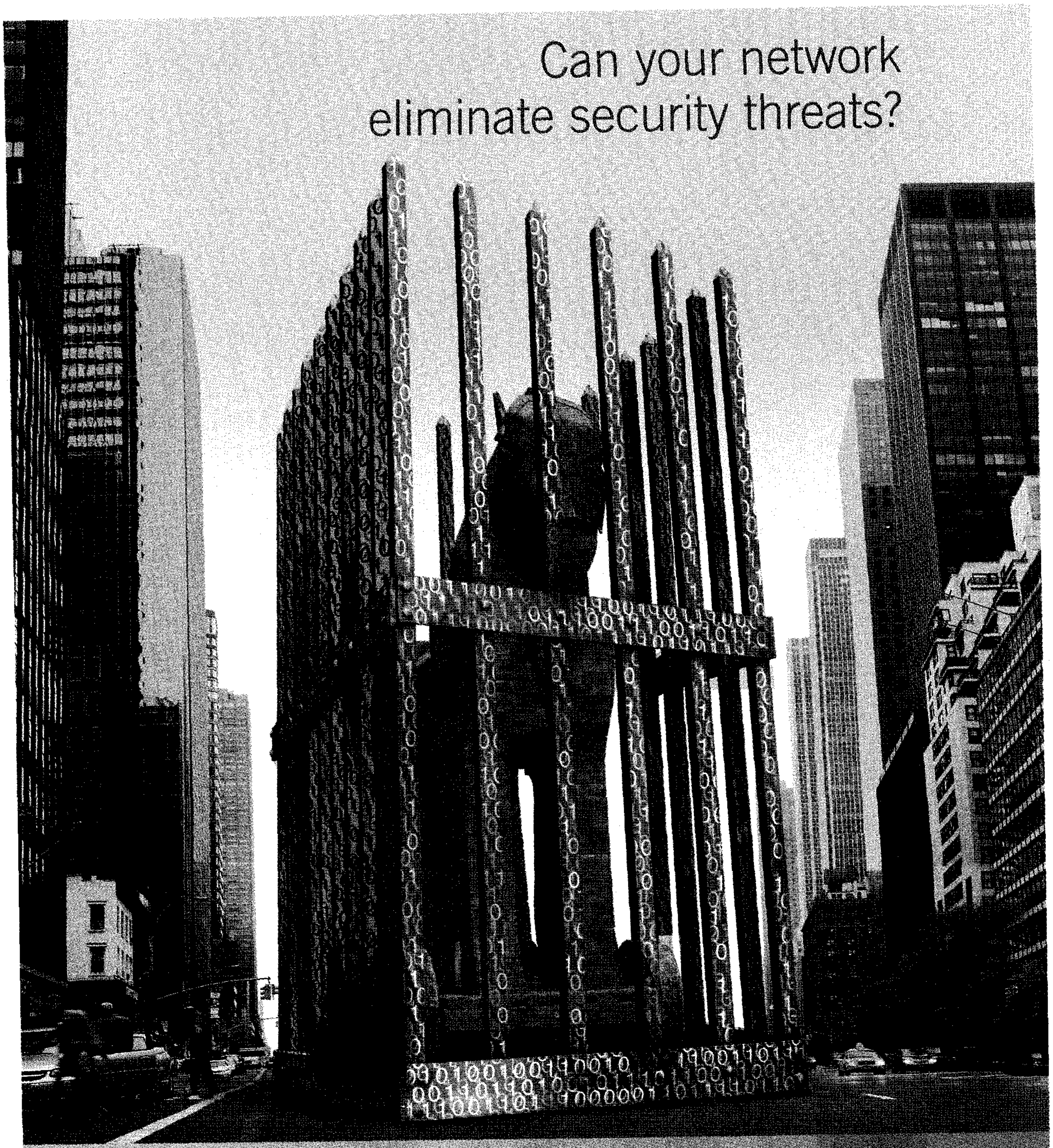
After firing the engine, Melvill intended to fly SpaceShipOne directly upward. But the plane was caught by a violent wind shear; he overcompensated, and, after zigzagging, ended up several degrees away from vertical. "A lot of pitching," he told the test's mission control, in Mojave, by radio. The deviation cost him height, but, according to Rutan, it was not especially dangerous. After seventy-six seconds, a timer shut down the engine. Melvill had reached a height of thirty-four miles. SpaceShipOne had such momentum in the thinning air that it continued to move at twenty-three hundred miles an hour, now in silence. Melvill arranged SpaceShipOne into its folded, "feathered" position, with the wings tilted upward, in readiness for reëntry. The horizon was nine hundred

A BLESSING RAIN

"There was a beautiful rain this morning."
"I was asleep."
                    He stroked her forehead.
She smiled at him, then laughed as she kept yawning.
"It was lovely rain." But I thought of the dead
I know. The sun shone through the rain
and it was lovely.
                         "I'm sure," she said.
There were so many names the rain recited:
Alan, Joseph and Claude and Charles and Roddy.
The sunlight came through the rain and the drizzle shone
as it had done before for everybody.
For John and Inge, Devindra and Hamilton.
"Blessed are the dead that the rain rains upon,"
wrote Edward Thomas. Her eyes closed in my arms,
but it was sleep. She was asleep again,
while the bright rain moved from Massade to Monchy.

Sometimes I stretch out, or you stretch out your hand,
and we lock palms; our crisscrossed histories join
and two maps fit. Bays, boundaries, rivers, roads
one country, one warm island. Is that noise rain
on the hot roof, is it sweeping out to sea
by the stones and shells of the almond cemetery?

—*Derek Walcott*



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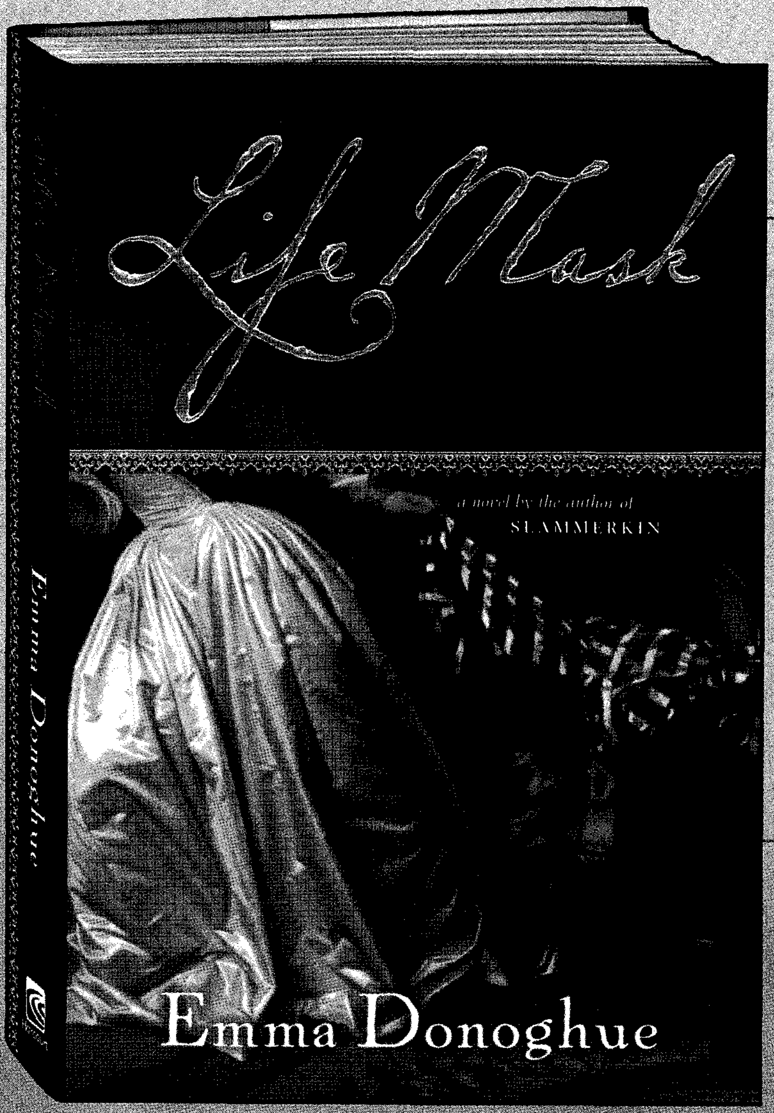
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miles away; the sky was black and empty. "Holy mackerel," Melvill said. Three minutes after leaving White Knight, as SpaceShipOne was reaching the apogee of its flight, there was a moment of alarm: when Melvill pushed the switch to set the trim of the stabilizers, which keep the spacecraft from pitching, only one moved. Within two seconds, he had resorted to a backup control, and the trim was set. Now he had a minute and a half before the Earth's air would disturb his peace. He put his hand into his flight-suit pocket and—fumbling, because time was short—took out a dozen M&M's and opened his hand. On Rutan's video footage of the cockpit, the candies float around Melvill's head. It's so quiet, you can hear them hitting the windows.

Melvill later compared the noise of reëntry to "somebody talking to you very, very sharply." In another momentary drama, the fairing around the engine's nozzle, softened by the heat of the motor, buckled. (According to Rutan, this presented no danger to the flight.) Rutan later said, "You know that if you jump off your roof and fall a couple of stories you're going to break your leg, but imagine falling ten, fifteen, twenty miles." In the most unnerving moment of the flight, Melvill was accelerating so fast that his body was experiencing pressure at five times the level of everyday gravity. "It's like a very exciting roller coaster," Rutan said. "It's ferocious for a moment during reëntry, just enough to be a lot of fun." At sixty thousand feet, Melvill straightened out the wings, and SpaceShipOne became a glider, returning to the Mojave airport eighty minutes after taking off. Melvill climbed onto the roof of SpaceShipOne, and straddled it like Major Kong in "Dr. Strangelove." His wife, who had not wanted him to make the flight, was waiting on the tarmac. Rutan's data showed that Melvill had reached a hundred kilometres by only four hundred feet. "If Mike had eaten a big breakfast, he wouldn't be an astronaut," he said.

Rutan, whose wife said that he had barely slept in the two weeks before the test flight (he remembers no such difficulties), drove out from mission control with Paul Allen to meet Melvill on the runway, taking a printed sign from someone in the crowd. It read "SpaceShipOne, Government Zero," and had been printed by Ernest Hancock, a libertarian talk-radio producer from Arizona. (The anti-government rhetoric associated with SpaceShipOne disregards, among other things, the fact that the Mojave airport's taxiways were improved this year with a $3.9-million grant from the F.A.A.)

"I was ecstatic," Rutan told me. "We have a few little things to clean up, like the X Prize." Three weeks later, Rutan announced that he would make a formal claim on the prize, whose rules demand notice of sixty days. The first flight would take place on September 29th, and the second sometime in the following two weeks.

Several weeks after Melvill's flight, John Carmack launched his Black Armadillo on a short, unmanned test flight. The craft was expected to rise to two hundred feet before slowly returning; instead, it reached six hundred feet, ran out of propellant, and crashed to the ground. The same weekend, Space Transport Corporation's Rubicon 1 rocket exploded over the Pacific. The head of one of the three dummies on board was washed ashore; the company later offered it for sale on eBay.

"It showed the world that the little guy can do it," Rutan told me when we had dinner recently. "Years of manned spaceflight and there was less activity this year than there was in 1961! That's ridiculous. Why is NASA running an airline? They should be doing basic research and making it available to American industry."

We were at the house in Mojave where he has lived since 1989. A few years earlier, during his third marriage, Rutan had been persuaded to move to Palmdale, which is half an hour south of Mojave and is more worldly. There he kept a poodle and shaved off the long, full sideburns that he regards as his trademark. When he met Tonya—his fourth wife, and "the best one he's ever had," in the affectionate view of a longtime neighbor—he regrew his sideburns, moved back to Mojave, and helped design a new house just outside town, situated on a spectacular spot in the desert, in the midst of Joshua trees.

He met me at the door of a white concrete hexagonal pyramid. At the dirt roadside, Rutan's street number was written on the tail end of a cargo plane;

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it pointed up at an angle, as if it had crashed into the sand. Inside, the house had the air of the hideaway of a young Medellín kingpin. It was a single open space reaching to a skylight at the pyramid's point. On one wall, where you might hope to see a view of the surrounding desert, a mural showed three stone pyramids by a lake, and, in the foreground, four figures standing on a promenade: a human couple, the Egyptian god Horus, and an alien with large eyes. Aspects of the mural's design correspond to ideas that Rutan has about the origin of the Egyptian pyramids, some of which he believes may have been built by a civilization earlier than ancient Egypt. The sound of the wind did not carry through the walls.

We ate sitting on a sofa beside a red trapezoid pool table, among stuffed toy animals that included a four-foot bear, a gift from Burt to Tonya. Rutan spoke in long, stump-speech paragraphs. When he wanted to emphasize a point, he leaned forward with the unsettling smile of a department-store Santa asking a child if he has been good. "No one went to jail!" he said of NASA's troubles with the Space Shuttle. "You go down to Kmart with a ski mask on for thirty-five dollars, and they send you to jail. But can you imagine spending hundreds of billions of dollars *after* making a promise to Congress that this will save money? No one went to jail!"

As we spoke, a bird screeched at increasing volume in a side room. Eventually, Tonya fetched Winglet, an African gray parrot that Burt had reared from its birth, twenty-five years ago. His tone softened.

"Can you do a duck?" Rutan asked the parrot. The parrot quacked.

"Can you do a cat?"

The parrot barked like a dog.

"A cat!"

It meowed.

Rutan picked up the bird and put its head into his mouth, as if to bite it off, and made a roaring sound. The bird clucked. "She likes the echo," Rutan said.

Rutan's desert house has no windows on the ground floor. It is a dark, silent capsule, designed for energy efficiency. Windows would compromise the home's protection from heat. Earlier, Tonya had described how her husband lived primarily in the company of his own thoughts, and the house seemed to be a symbol of this temperament, as well as a product of it. Like SpaceShipOne—a solution to an engineering problem solved forty years ago; a design to inspire the awe of Earthlings while moving at high speed away from them; a smallish step for mankind, a giant leap for Burt Rutan—the house's design reflects a mind that seems to be happiest when it ignores the world beyond it. "I see enough of the ugly desert when I drive to work," Rutan said, laughing.

A few years ago, Rutan developed heart trouble, and he was fitted with a defibrillator. His brother refers to him as Robo-Burt. He is now prohibited from flying a plane except with another pilot on board, and, according to Tonya, there is doubt whether he would risk riding as a passenger on a future flight of SpaceShipOne—not for fear of his own safety but out of worry that his flailing death by heart attack would distract the pilot and endanger the flight.

Yet whenever Rutan talks of space tourism he still includes himself in the adventure. He figures that he has forty or fifty more years to live. During dinner, he said, "I really think I can go to the moon now. There's a whole bunch of people with new dreams. And I think they're valid now." He takes calls every day from people wanting to buy tickets to space from him; he explains several times a day that he has built a prototype, and has not launched an airline. Yet he thinks that space tourism will soon be economically viable. "You could charge someone a hundred thousand dollars, maybe more. To get rid of the rich guys, service the rich guys. Theoretically, I could do it next year. But I don't call *that* space tourism. Space tourism is when you get more seats, and you can do it at thirty or fifty thousand dollars. And then the next generation would be ten or twelve thousand. Nobody's space airline will be as safe as an airplane. But it's going to be as safe as skydiving." He looked at the giant Teddy bear, which he has half-seriously considered as a SpaceShipOne passenger on September 29th, and added, "Well, certainly safer than climbing Everest." ♦

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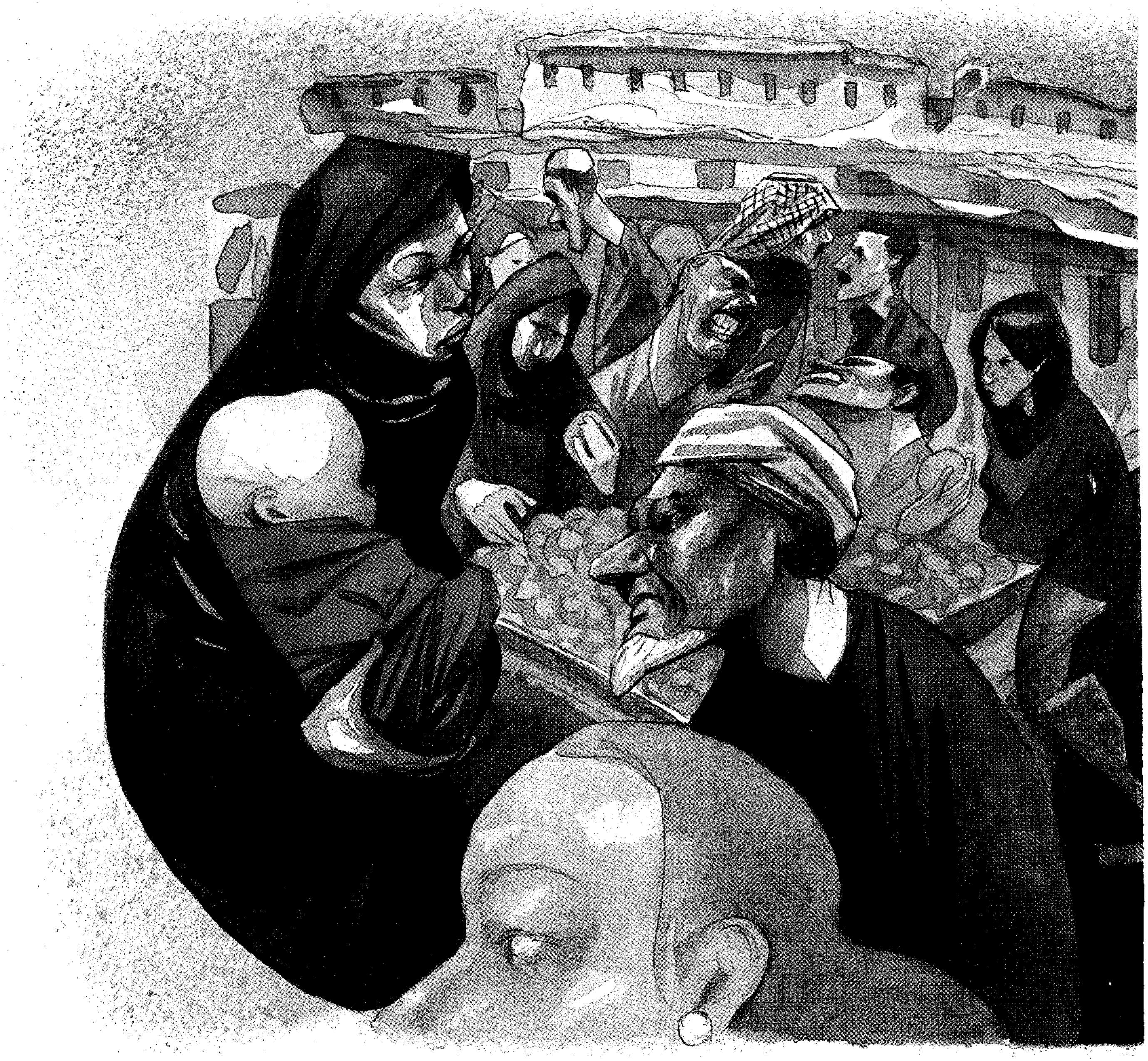


STEVE BRODNER

A REPORTER AT LARGE

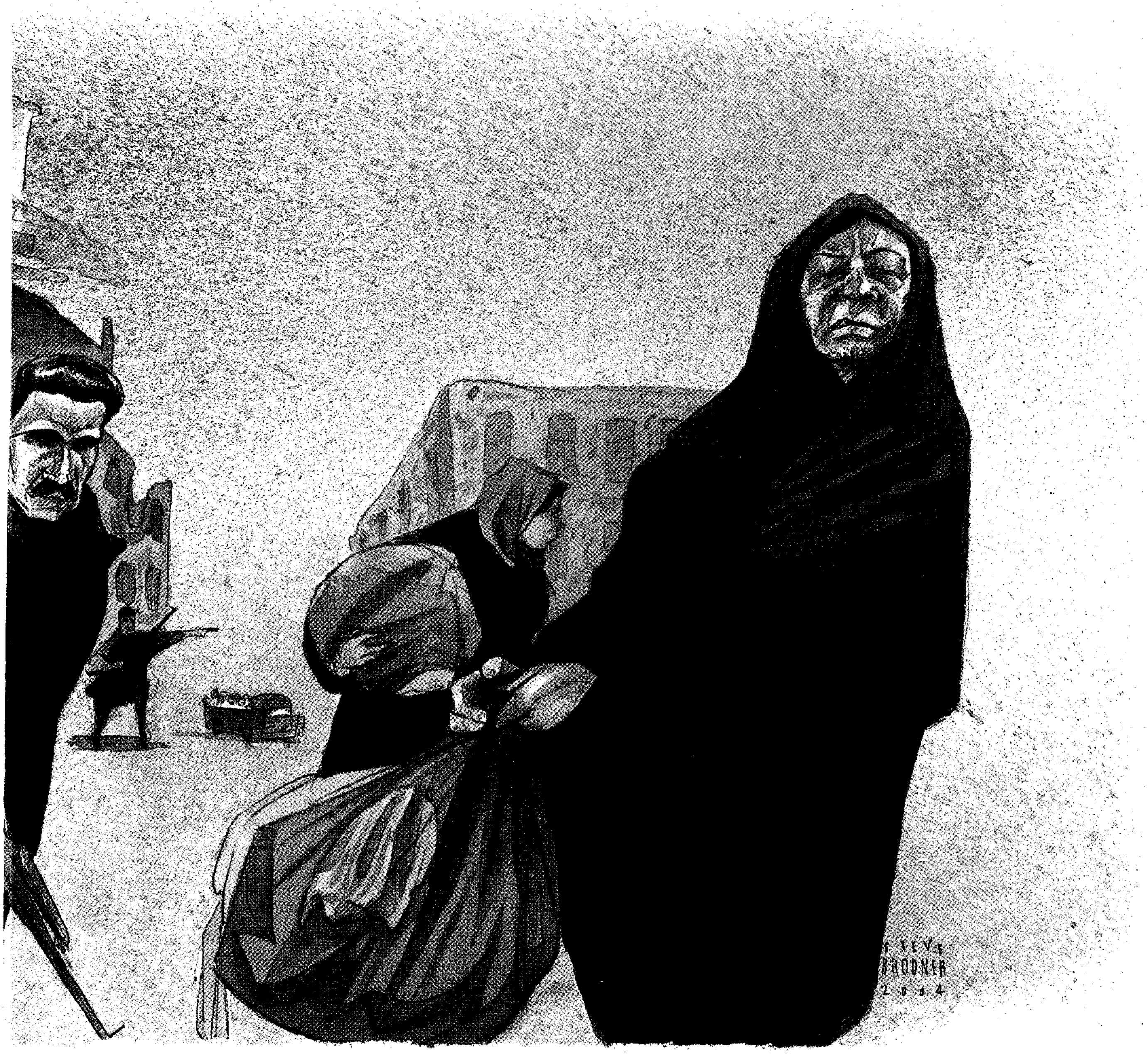
THE NEXT IRAQI WAR?

What Kirkuk's struggle to reverse Saddam's ethnic cleansing signals for the future of Iraq.

BY GEORGE PACKER

Luna Dawood was twenty-four years old when Saddam Hussein paid a surprise visit to her house in Kirkuk, the ethnically mixed city in northern Iraq. She admits that she reacted like a teenager. It was an October afternoon in 1983, and two Presidential helicopters landed in an open field; tanks cordoned off the tidy middle-class streets of the Arrapha neighborhood, home to employees of the state-owned Northern Oil Company; and Saddam, flanked by a large security entourage, showed up at the Dawoods' kitchen door. The Baathists' long-standing war against Iraqi Kurds was intensifying, and it appeared that Saddam wanted to secure the loyalty of those who worked in Kirkuk's valuable oil industry. Even today, Dawood, whose father was employed by the oil company, recalls Saddam's visit a bit giddily: he was handsome in his olive-drab military uniform, and paused to admire the house and ask friendly questions. His cologne was so overpowering that, for days afterward, Dawood couldn't wash the scent off the hand that had shaken the President's, and the living-room sofa smelled so strongly that it had to be given away.

Saddam refused coffee and chocolates, but a painting of a woman drawing water from a tree-shaded river caught his eye—Dawood's brother, who was serving on



The city could be a model for national unity or could trigger a civil war; it is compared to New York and, more often, to Sarajevo.

the front in the Iran-Iraq war, had painted it—and the President claimed it as a gift. The Dawoods are Assyrian Christians, not Arabs, and when Saddam addressed Luna's mother in Arabic she replied in English, which she'd learned from the British managers of the Iraqi Petroleum Company before it was nationalized by the Baathists, in 1972. "That time is gone," Saddam scolded her. "You must learn Arabic."

A Presidential trailer was parked in the Dawoods' garden, and neighbors lined up to go inside for a private audience with the President. Saddam's close adviser and half brother, Barzan al-Tikriti, presented each petitioner with three thousand dinars from a bag full of money. To her everlasting regret, Dawood was too timorous to enter Saddam's trailer. Her younger sister Fula did so, and emerged with both the cash and a job at the oil company. One of Dawood's cousins entreated Saddam to release his brother, who was serving five years in prison for comparing the face of a top Baathist official to that of a monkey; Saddam replied that he couldn't interfere with the judicial system. Then he came out of the trailer to tell the assembled residents that Iraq was at war with Iran to protect the purity of Iraqi women from Ayatollah Khomeini's rampaging troops. The helicopters took off, and everyone assumed that Saddam had left Kirkuk.

But the trailer remained in the Dawoods' garden; their phone was cut off, and security men gathered in the kitchen. Without explanation, the family was told to spend the night on the second floor. At two in the morning, unable to sleep, Dawood went to the window and looked down at the garden. As if in a dream, she saw Saddam step out of the trailer wearing a white dishdasha. The next day, he was gone.

The President visited Kirkuk again in 1990. This time, his helicopter landed in the square in front of the municipal building. By then, Dawood was working there, as an accountant in the finance department. Saddam announced a campaign to beautify Kirkuk: the walled citadel—the oldest part of the city, situated on a plateau across the dry Khasa

"I don't know how to tell you this, but it looks like you have a brain the size of a walnut."

River bed from the modern city—was going to be cleaned up, beginning with the removal of the eight or nine hundred mostly Kurdish and Turkoman families living in its ancient houses. The next day, fifty million dinars arrived at Dawood's office from Baghdad. She had forty-five days to dig through title deeds, some dating back to 1820, and pay compensation to displaced homeowners.

The process of emptying out the Kirkuk citadel was the climax of a forty-year campaign known to Iraqis as Arabization. Beginning in 1963, and continuing up to the eve of the American invasion last year, the Baathist regime in Baghdad deported tens of thousands of Kurds—some Kurdish sources put the number at three hundred thousand—from Kirkuk and the surrounding region, forced other ethnic minorities from their houses, and imported similar numbers of Arabs to Kirkuk from the south. Dawood's job in city government, which she has held since the mid-nineteen-eighties, required her to distribute dinars to families forfeiting their homes, sift through crumbling property records, and handle the traffic of deportees at the municipal building. She was a bureaucratic expediter of ethnic cleansing.

I met Dawood during a trip to Kirkuk this summer. A slim, energetic forty-five-year-old, she is unmarried, and, unlike most Iraqi women, she wears Western clothes and carries herself with self-confidence. She has wide, startled eyes and the kind of strong nose seen on statuary from Nineveh, and when she talks about Kirkuk's history under Saddam her anxious smile reveals a row of crooked teeth. "It was a tragedy I don't want to remember," she told me when we met in her office. She then proceeded to remember everything. "They were poor people," she said. "Each one who came to take the money, in his eyes you saw the tractor coming to take his house." Crowds awaiting deportation filled the hallway outside her office; women fainted. If the secret police instructed her to delay paying someone they intended to arrest, Dawood would quietly urge the reluctant man to leave Kirkuk without his money.

At the end of one long day, an old Kurdish farmer approached Dawood's desk. She presented him with a consent form that granted the government ownership of his family's land in exchange for several thousand dinars.

"I would like some water first," the old man said before signing the document. Dawood gave him a glass. He drank the water, signed the form, and fell dead in her lap.

"The things I saw," Dawood told me, "nobody saw."

A few weeks before the American invasion in March, 2003, the government in Baghdad sent a secret order to officials in Kirkuk: immediately burn all paperwork related to the Central Housing Plan—the regime's euphemism for the ethnic-cleansing campaign. The Baathists were meticulous record-keepers; outside the municipal building, officials torched three large garbage containers filled with papers, and the bonfire lasted for almost twenty-four hours.

Dawood decided to ignore the order. "I can't burn these things," she said. "How can we compensate these people if these documents are burned?" Her motives were not entirely altruistic. Dawood was a Baathist (a requirement of the job), and she wanted to protect herself against any accusations of misappropriating funds. She is also an admitted busybody. "You know, I put my nose in everything," she said. "I want to know everything." So she lied to her boss, and instead of burning the files she secretly transferred them by car to the house in Arrapha, which she still shares with Fula and another unmarried sister. Most of the documents are now kept on the roof of the municipal building, in an airless slant-ceilinged storeroom to which only Dawood has the key. A waist-high sea of paper and dust inside has yet to attract the interest of either Iraqi or American officials, although among the documents that Dawood salvaged are secret letters that expose the Baath Party's sustained effort to transform Kirkuk from Iraq's most diverse city into a place dominated by Arabs loyal to the regime. (The Arabization policy was never publicly declared.)

Since the American invasion, Kirkuk has become the stage of an ethnic power struggle. Some observers say that the city could be a model for national unity or could trigger a civil war; Kirkuk is compared to New York and, more often, to Sarajevo. How the new Iraq corrects the historical injustices recorded in Dawood's files will reveal much about the kind of country that Iraqis choose to live in—or if it will remain a country at all.

Inside the storeroom, Dawood waded through the files and stooped to inspect them with a kind of wit's-end affection, like a mother with too many unruly children. "Look—look—how many people?" she cried. "How could I work this all? Do you know how much I have in my mind? All this! All this! I must get it out!"

Kirkuk sits near the foothills of the Zagros Mountains, not far from the southern border of Kurdistan, an autonomous region that broke free of Baathist control in 1991. The vast oil fields outside the city constitute around seven per cent of Iraq's total reserves. In part, the Arabization program was aimed at securing Baghdad's authority over this valuable resource, but primarily Saddam's regime was motivated by ideology. The history and demography of Kirkuk were an affront to the fascist dreams of the Baath Arab Socialist Party. Kirkuk is a dense, cosmopolitan city along a trade route between Constantinople and Persia, and its layers of successive civilizations had nothing to do with Arab glory. Around the city's markets and the citadel, residents still live and move in close quarters, and a visitor finds the variety of faces, tolerant manners, public female presence, and polyglot street life of a mixed city. Kirkuk feels closer to Istanbul than to Baghdad.

One local historian, an elderly Arab named Yasin Ali al-Hussein, told me that Kirkuk was built by Jewish slaves of the Babylonian captivity; although scholars doubt this version, until the creation of Israel, in 1948, several thousand Jews lived in the city's twisted back streets, many of them near the old souk at the foot of the citadel. An Armenian church dates from the first millennium. (Christians make up roughly five per cent of the population.) In the fourth century B.C., Xenophon noted the presence of an ethnic group that might have been Kurdish. Turkomans from Central Asia, ethnically distinct from Turks, migrated to the region about a thousand years ago. During Ottoman rule, which was established at the citadel in the sixteenth century and lasted until the arrival of British troops, during the First World War, many educated Turkomans became imperial officeholders. More than a century ago, Arab immigrants began settling around Kirkuk, mostly in the farmland west and south of the city; these "original Arabs" are distinct in almost every way from those imported by the Baathist regime. E. B. Soane, a British intelligence officer who travelled through Mesopotamia in the years before the First World War, observed, "Kirkuk is thus a collection of all the races of eastern Turkey—Jew, Arab, Syrian, Armenian, Chaldean, Turk, Turkoman, and Kurd—and consequently enjoys considerable freedom from fanaticism."

Fanaticism is the legacy of Saddam's Arabization policy. Every aspect of Kirkuk's history is now violently contested. Kurds, Arabs, and Turkomans all make claims of ethnic primacy in a city where there are only pluralities. (According to the 1957 census, conducted before Arabization began, the city was forty per cent Turkoman and thirty-five per cent Kurdish.) Ali Bayatli, a Turkoman lawyer, insisted that his people were direct descendants of the Sumerians and therefore the first residents of Kirkuk, with unspecified rights. Kurdish politicians have two slogans designed to end any argument: "Kirkuk is the heart of Kurdistan" and "Kirkuk is the Jerusalem of the Kurds." Arabs, meanwhile, are angry about the sudden loss of power that followed the removal of Saddam. Luna Dawood's view of her city's future is grim. "It will be war till the end," she said. "Everyone says Kirkuk belongs to us: Arabs, Kurds, Turkomans. To whom will it belong? We want America to stay here and change minds—to teach what's freedom, what's human. That's what our people don't know. They are animals."

Fifteen miles outside the city, on a road heading northwest, I met Muhammad Khader, a Kurdish farmer who was hoeing a vegetable garden next to a cluster of ruined-looking houses. Khader had recently returned to the area from Erbil, a city in Kurdistan, where he worked as a butcher. After the American invasion, he and his two wives, their ten children, and twenty-five other families followed American and Kurdish soldiers south into Iraq, with the goal of reclaiming Amshaw, their ancestral village, from Arab settlers. Khader, who wore traditional Kurdish pants, which are drawn tight at the waist and ankles but hang loose around the legs, took me up into the surrounding hills. It was spring, and the vivid green grass was studded with yellow wildflowers and blood-red roses, which are tragic emblems in Kurdish poetry.

"This was the village," Khader said, pointing at a pattern of grassy humps on the hillside. Shards of terra-cotta pottery lay in the dirt. "That was our house," he went on. "Exactly here." Farther up the hill, a field of jagged headstones marked the village cemetery.

In 1961, the first phase of a long war between Iraq's central government and Kurdish guerrillas, known as peshmerga, began. The rebel Kurds demanded linguistic and cultural rights, control over regional security and financial affairs, and authority over Kirkuk and its oil. In 1963, following the coup that first brought Baathists to power, Iraqi soldiers attacked Amshaw and other villages. Khader was three years old. "I remember it like a dream, a bad dream, with children crying and people fighting and dying," he said. The villagers fled north, and were forced to retreat all the way to Erbil. Amshaw was razed. In the ensuing years, the lands around Amshaw were distributed to Arab tribes from the south, and new houses were built for Arab settlers.

I asked Khader if his family was ever compensated for their loss.

"Are you making fun of me?" he said, staring in disbelief. "They took everything. You see how I am now? That's just how we left—no blankets, nothing."

Sabiha Hamood and her husband are Arabs who moved their family to Kirkuk from Baghdad in the late nineteen-eighties, lured by a free house and ten thousand dinars. "Arabs like us are known as the benefitters," Hamood said. "We came here just to live in a house. My husband used to work in the Ministry of Housing, but it wasn't enough money to buy a house." Like Hamood, the overwhelming majority of the benefitters are Shia, and many were employed in the military, the state security apparatus, or the civil service. The house offered to Hamood's family was in a middle-class Turkoman neighborhood called Taseen, across the road from the Kirkuk airbase. Hamood convinced herself that the former owner of her house had been handsomely compensated and bore no grudge.

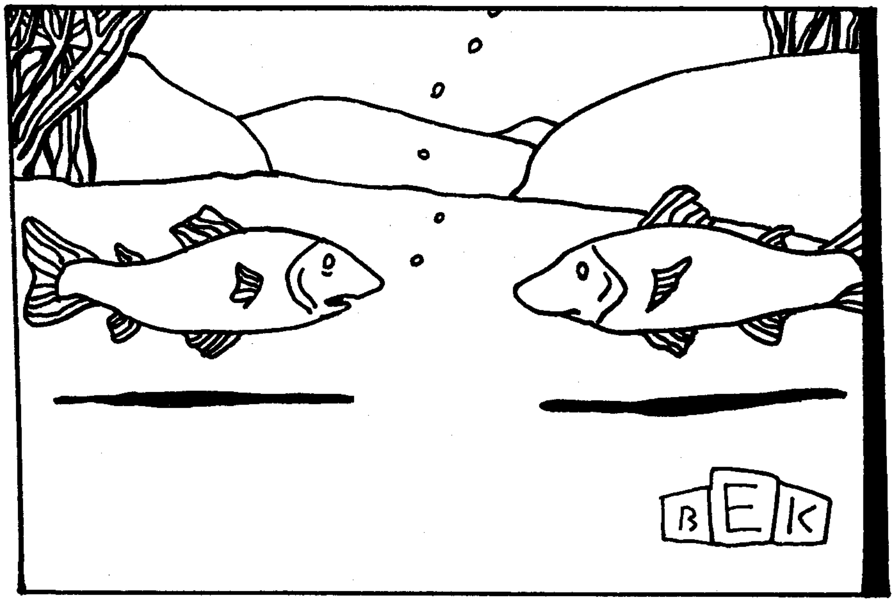
Several doors down is a two-story house that once belonged to the family of Fakheraldin Akbar, a Turkoman woman who works with Luna Dawood in the finance department. One day in 1988, the family received a government letter declaring that a railroad was going to be built through the neighborhood. "They gave us three days," Akbar recalled. "On the second day, policemen were standing outside the door. We took our furniture and went to stay with an aunt who lived along the road to Baghdad." The family was awarded a sum that represented less than a quarter of the value of the house. The railroad was never built. Four or five years ago, attending a funeral in her old neighborhood, Akbar decided to go and look at the house for the first time since the family's eviction. "I said to myself, 'Let me just walk past the door. I won't speak to them—why should I? I don't know them, they don't know me.' " The benefitters who were given the house had painted over its beautiful wooden front door.

Ethnic cleansing in Kirkuk proceeded in piecemeal fashion, but the Baathists were following a master plan. Their goal was to make Kirkuk a predominantly Arab city, with a security belt of Arab neighborhoods encircling it, especially along the vulnerable northern and eastern edges, which faced Kurdistan. Accordingly, Kurds were forbidden by law to build, buy, or improve houses in Kirkuk. Any Kurdish family that couldn't prove residence in Kirkuk from the 1957 census had no legal right to live there, which meant that thousands of Kurds were displaced to refugee camps in Kurdistan or to southern Iraq. Some were given a choice: leave the city or become an Arab. This was called "correcting" one's nationality, and thousands of Kurds and Turkomans agreed to undergo the humiliation in order to stay in Kirkuk or hold on to a job or obtain a business license. Meanwhile, one Kurdish neighborhood after another was torn down—allegedly, to widen a road, build a munitions factory, expand a base. After 1980, the teaching of languages other than Arabic was forbidden in city schools. Kurds and other non-Arabs were frozen out of government jobs; before the war, according to one Kurdish official, the oil company had eleven thousand employees, of whom eighteen were Kurds.

"I love the way you make me rethink my commitment to family values."

Development in Kirkuk was allowed in only one direction: south, toward Baghdad. The Arabization neighborhoods that arose have the lethargic feel of an overgrown village, where women are shrouded in black body-covering *abayas;* the new buildings were thrown up in graceless concrete along wide, empty streets. The few Kurdish and Turkoman neighborhoods in the center of town that survived demolition became choked with traffic and were deprived of parks, sewers, and public transportation. Over the years, ten or twelve families packed into dilapidated compounds that had been built for two or three families. The dried-up riverbed filled with garbage.

The climax of the regime's persecution of Kurds came in 1988, when the decimation of Kurdish villages in Iraq's northern mountains reached genocidal proportions and chemical weapons were used against civilians in Halabja. Toward the end of that year, the governor of Kirkuk wrote a letter to the Baathist official in charge of Arabization, Taha Yasin Ramadan, who, in addition to being a lifelong friend of Saddam's, is a Kurd. (Iraqis know him simply as "the Butcher.") This letter, which was among the documents that Luna Dawood salvaged, offers a report on an intensive phase of the ethnic-cleansing campaign in Kirkuk, from June 1, 1985, to October 31, 1988. "We would like to inform you that we have followed the strict orders and instructions that you made for our work, which pushed us to work harder to serve the citizens, the sons of the courageous leader of victory and peace, Mr. President the Patriot Saddam Hussein (may God save him)," the governor wrote. What follows is a detailed statistical account: 19,146 people removed from villages "forbidden for security reasons"; registration documents of 96,533 people transferred from Kirkuk to Erbil province in preparation for removal; 2,405 families removed from villages lying near oil facilities; 10,918 Arab families, including 53,834 people, transferred to Kirkuk from other provinces; 8,250 pieces of residential land and



"With all these omega-3 fatty acids, you'd think I'd feel better."

1,112 houses distributed to Arab families transferred from other provinces. The letter noted that these removals, transfers, and distributions created a net gain of 51,862 Arabs in the province and a net loss of 18,096 Kurds during this period, making Arabs the largest group in Kirkuk for the first time. The final phase of Arabization was beginning, the governor reported in conclusion: "The displacement process from the city center is now taking its course."

Two years later, just before the invasion of Kuwait, Saddam made his announcement outside Kirkuk's municipal building that all human life be removed from the citadel. According to Gha'ab Fadhel, the director of Kirkuk's archeological museum, who oversaw the bulldozing of dwellings, the purpose of the citadel project was simply to excavate and restore ancient monuments. The eight hundred and fifty Ottoman-era houses on the site were ill kept, unhygienically crowded, and mostly occupied by poor renters. "Their removal had nothing to do with politics," he insisted. But the citadel was the heart of the city. On the Muslim holiday of Eid, Christians joined Muslims to celebrate at the Tomb of the Prophets, an ancient shrine where Daniel and Ezra are apocryphally said to be buried. On Christian holidays, the Muslims reciprocated.

At the souk near the citadel, the Turkoman owner of a women's dress shop recalled that, years ago, the citadel was the site of many feasts. In the quiet of summer evenings, he said, the scent of grilled meat would drift down into the market. "From what I hear, Turkomans were living there," he said.

"Why do you say that?" a Kurdish customer asked. "We were living there, too."

Across the alley from the shop, a Turkoman woman selling shoes and purses told me, "We were the last family to leave the citadel." Her father, a wealthy trader in seeds, had a large house by the western gate that overlooked the river. He built houses on the citadel for Jews whom he employed as scribes. "We had relations with so many people on the citadel," she said. "Like family, not neighbors." One day, Baathists knocked at the door: the family had a month in which to vacate their house. "The citadel was the most beautiful place," she said. "My childhood was there. I see it every day." She pointed to the remains of a stone wall, overgrown with yellow grass, just visible above the shops across the alley.

The last houses inside the citadel were destroyed in 1998. By then, nobody had lived there for eight years, and no one was allowed there except members of a Republican Guard unit, who were positioned on the citadel to suppress an uprising or attack. Last year, when a wave of Kurdish peshmerga and American Special Forces soldiers swept down from the north, the dream of Arab Kirkuk collapsed overnight.

A few weeks after the liberation of Kirkuk, in April, 2003, Jordan Becker, a twenty-four-year-old lieutenant with the 173rd Airborne Brigade, was told by his company commander to sort out a problem in Arrapha, the neighborhood where Luna Dawood lives. Among the thousands of Kurdish deportees who had come back to Kirkuk to reclaim houses and land—in some cases chasing Arab occupants out, in others finding that the residents had fled—sixty-seven families were squatting in the fine houses that had been abandoned by top Baathist officials. These Kurds had been living for years in refugee camps in the hills around Suleimaniya, one of the regional capitals of Kurdistan. Becker, who had a shelf full of books on Kurdish language and Middle Eastern history in his tent at the American base, was given the mission to tell the Kurds that they had to vacate. At the first house that he visited, the wife swore that if the Americans made her leave she would set herself on fire.

Becker returned to the base and conferred with his captain. They decided that he should try again, but this time Becker, a blue-eyed Southern Californian who's built like a cornerback, left his body armor behind; in this less threatening guise, he sat down with the family for two hours. "What I learned about these people is that they have a sense of history, and historic patience," he said. "They have a sense of what's best for their community, and when you convinced them that they were going to drive a wedge between their community and the Arabs, and between their community and the Americans, they realized they didn't want to do that." Becker's argument to the Kurds was an abstract one: "If you have a house in a country that's unstable and violent, then all you have is a house. But if you have a house in a country that's stable and ruled by law, then you have a lot more than a house." Then he made his approach in more concrete terms, telling the family, "Just because you won a war doesn't mean you'll get shit for free. If you support law over victor's justice, though, you'll be investing in the future of Iraq." Becker smiled. "And they said, 'That's cool.' "

The Kurdish squatters left Arrapha. That was in the early weeks, when the

Kurds regarded the Americans as saviors and were willing to postpone rectification a little longer. During my visit to Kirkuk this summer, the historic patience of the Kurds was running out. In his speech to the family in Arrapha, Lieutenant Becker had articulated the policy of the occupation authority better than any high officials had: old grievances must be settled with laws, not by force; until new laws are in place, the status quo has to be maintained. Yet, more than a year after the removal of Saddam, a legal mechanism for resolving individual property disputes has barely begun to function. As for a larger political solution to the status of Kirkuk, the occupation authority avoided the issue entirely, and the interim constitution signed in March by the former Governing Council declared that Kirkuk's future will not be resolved until there is a permanent constitution. Meanwhile, the American forces in the city function, as one soldier told me, "like a bouncer in the middle of a nasty bar fight." Kirkuk remains dangerously stalled, while facts that could force the most extreme outcome steadily accumulate on the ground.

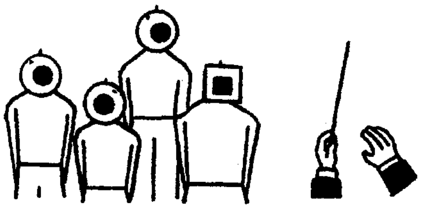
Since the invasion, more and more Arabs have been uprooted from their homes. A report by the refugee organization Global I.D.P. puts the total number of Arabs displaced in the north at a hundred thousand, although the absence of international organizations in Iraq makes it impossible to reach an accurate count. Inside the bombed barracks and helicopter hangars of an Iraqi Air Force base northwest of Kirkuk, near the American base, I found a group of Arab squatters. Two old men who spoke for the fifty-two families there said that Kurdish fighters had chased them out of Amshaw, the small village that I had just visited.

"We have young men who believe Amshaw belongs to them," one of the Arab men, Ali Aday, said. "I tell them, 'My son, they say it belongs to the Kurds.' They say, 'How can it? We were born and raised in those houses.' " The old man pointed out that the number of Kurdish families who had taken over Amshaw was just half the number of Arabs who had fled—there were enough houses in Amshaw for twenty-five Arab families to return and live together with the Kurds. "We just want to know who will give us our rights," Ali Aday said. American soldiers in the area had given the Arab refugees blankets and food, and told them to stay put until the problem could be sorted out by law. "Where is the government that will give us our rights? Is it from America? From the Iraqi government? We don't know. It isn't possible to just leave us here without our rights."

A mile away, a forlorn camp of seventeen tents stood in a field next to a military pillbox. A ragged turquoise flag with a white crescent moon and star—the symbol of the militant Iraqi Turkoman Front—hung limply in the heat. The camp is also symbolic—the tents were empty—but a handful of men were standing watch. They were Turkomans who had been expelled in 1980 from Bilawa, a nearby settlement. They showed me copies of property deeds from 1938, black negative images of British documents; they also had Ottoman-era deeds, they said. Part of their property had been taken over by the Air Force base, and another part was occupied by a wealthy Arab, who refused to leave. The Turkomans also claimed the land where the Arab refugees were squatting in helicopter hangars. It was hard to imagine how all this could be worked out.

"The solution is for people to go back to where they're from," one Turkoman said. "Before Saddam, where were these Arabs? This is the solution, exactly. We want it just like before Saddam."

On the other side of the city, hundreds of Kurdish families had taken up residence in the tunnels and under the grandstands of Kirkuk's soccer stadium, which was built in a razed Kurdish neighborhood. On a dusty field beside the stadium, hundreds more families are living in tents. The director of a Kurdish refugee organization estimated that nine thousand families have returned to Kirkuk. Most of them were expelled from Kirkuk a decade or more ago—taken by government truck to the provincial border and dumped alongside the road—and have lived in refugee camps ever since. More of them are returning to Kirkuk every day—in August, by one account, five hundred people a day—even though living conditions are squalid and almost no help has been offered by the Americans, international aid groups, or the city government. A Kurdish man named Farhad Muhammad echoed what the displaced Arabs had told me. "I really don't know who will give us a house, because there are many, many governments in Iraq," he said. "We hope the new government won't be like Saddam's."



Despite the lack of housing in Kirkuk, the Kurdish political parties have begun to accelerate the return of Kurds in advance of an Iraqi census and elections. Kurdish government employees in Suleimaniya have been told to return to Kirkuk, and have been promised that their salaries will be sustained until they find new positions. In Erbil this June, forty Kurdish families originally from Kirkuk were ordered to vacate the building in which they had lived for years as refugees and which a politically connected businessman plans to turn into a supermarket; they were given three thousand dollars apiece and sent back to their home town. In July, I found a number of them in Kirkuk, building simple houses illegally in the old Kurdish neighborhoods of Azadi and Rahimawa. Some Arab leaders claim that Kurds, including some who had never lived in Kirkuk, are moving to the city in an attempt to tip the ethnic scale. One of them called the effort "Kurdification."

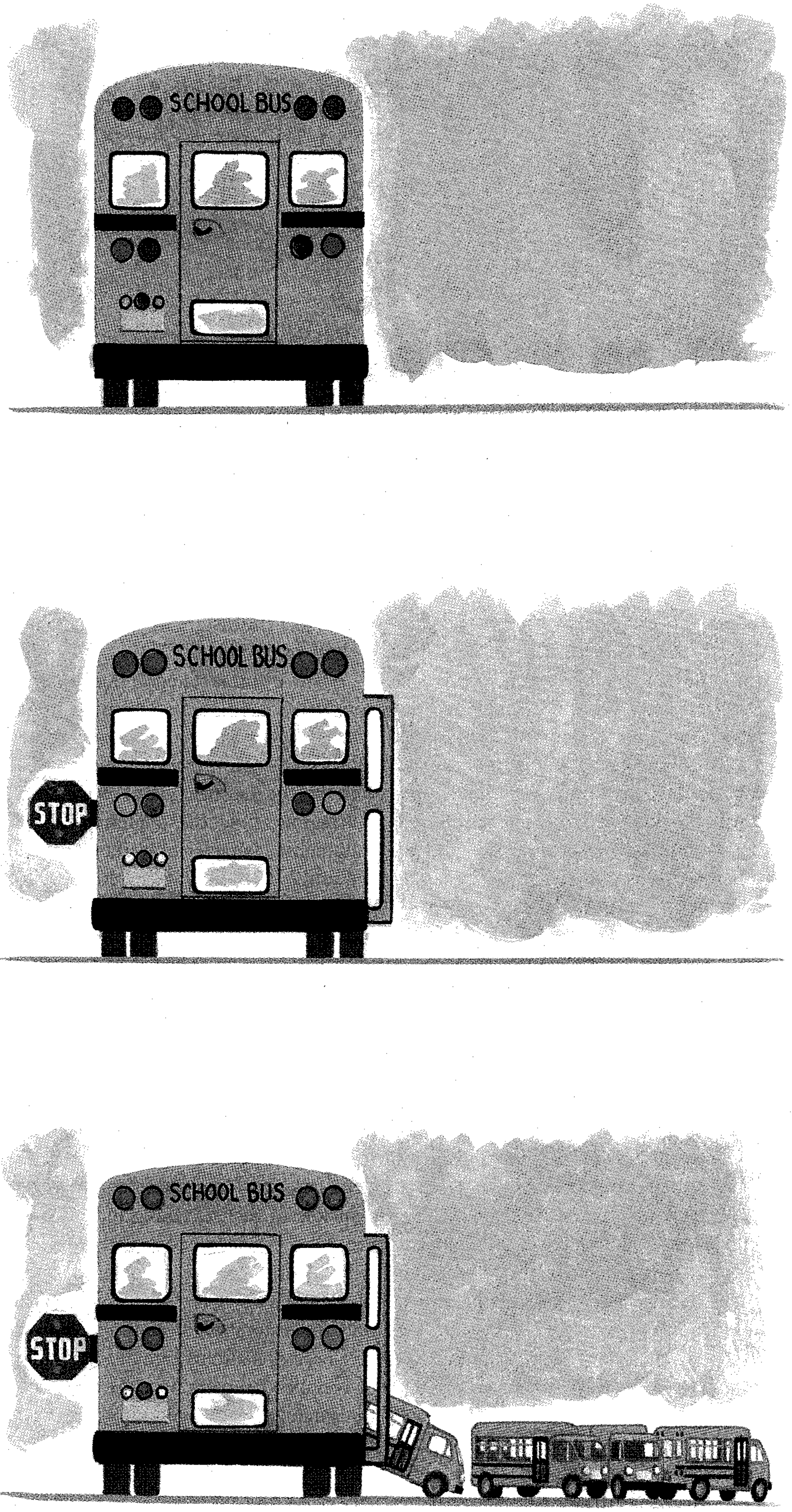
Meanwhile, Arab benefitters are leaving. Sabiha Hamood, the woman who moved with her family from Baghdad in the nineteen-eighties, sold her house this past spring, taking advantage of the inflated prices that wealthy Kurds are willing to pay for nice homes. In Qadisiya, a neighborhood in the south of the city that was built during Arabization, I met a group of Arab men attending a funeral. They took me back to a dingy cinder-block house, into which three families who had been forced from their homes were squeezed. In the immediate neighborhood, they said, a hundred Arab families had sold their houses to Kurds and left the city. The men were Shia, former policemen and soldiers, now unemployed and filled with grievances. Riyadh Shayoob, who came to Kirkuk from Basra in 1986, when he was five, had been driven from his house in a Kurdish area and been refused employment by the new Iraqi police force. He was making a meagre living selling trinkets in the souk, where he suffered contempt and threats from Kurds. Some of them, he said, mockingly sell CDs with images of Arab prisoners being tortured in Abu Ghraib. "They told me, 'Go back where you came from. Don't stay in Kirkuk,' " Shayoob said with a melancholy smile. "Before, I had Kurdish friends, but now they don't support me. They've turned against us."

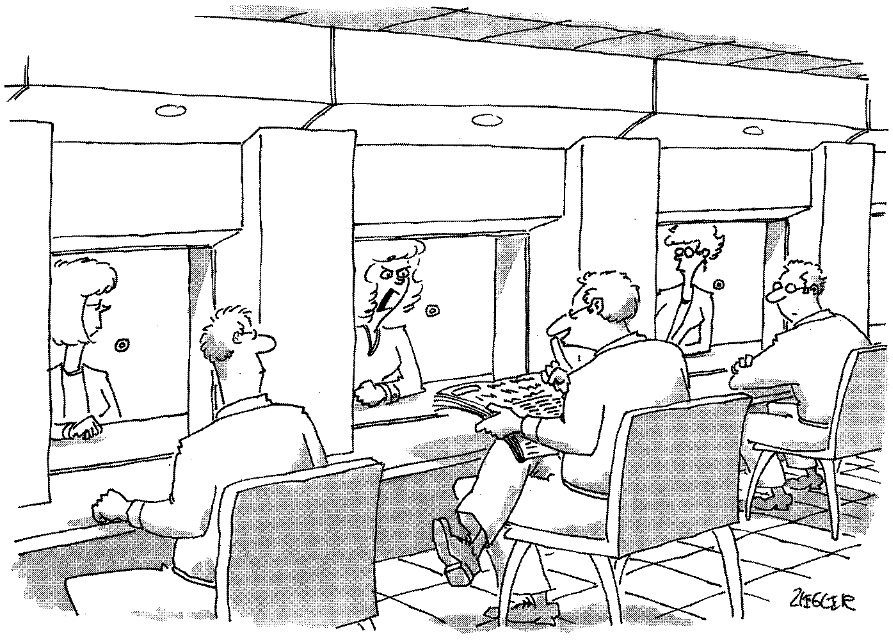
Government jobs, I was told, now go almost exclusively to Kurds. The new governor and the police chief are Kurds, and all the television networks are in Kurdish; the Arabs are being driven out of the city, and they have no one powerful to back them—the long list of Arab complaints bore a striking resemblance to the predicament of the Kurds in Kirkuk under Saddam. To these men, the Kurds were now the benefitters. "There's more injustice now than under Saddam," a bearded, tough-looking man named Ethir Muhammad insisted. "Even if Saddam did these things, what's our guilt? We did nothing to them."

In Kirkuk, the Arab-Kurdish conflict has been intensified by the insurgency against the Iraqi government, which has recently grown worse: in the past few weeks, two car bombings in Kirkuk have killed at least forty people. The Kurds are often considered collaborators of the Americans, while many of the imported Arabs sympathize with the Sunni or Shiite resistance forces. Moqtada al-Sadr, the radical Shiite cleric, has claimed that the Kurds are Muslim apostates and face damnation; over the summer, several hundred Kurds fled to Kirkuk from Samarra and other Arab cities after being denounced in Sunni mosques as traitors. The Arab men in the cinder-block house were followers of Sadr's representative in Kirkuk, whose mosque was raided in May by American soldiers. (They discovered a cache of weapons and arrested around thirty people.) All vowed to stay in the city. "Kirkuk has turned into a jungle," Ethir Muhammad said. "If someone comes to force me to leave, then either I'll kill him or he'll kill me. This is the law of the jungle."

Among imported Arabs, I heard various conspiracy stories—that mass graves dug by Saddam's regime are in fact archeological sites thousands of years old, that the chemical weapons dropped on Halabja were actually sacks of plaster dust. (This

SKETCHBOOK BY BRUCE McCALL





theory was offered by a fireman employed by the oil company, whose house in Arapha looks directly across a field at the former mansion of Ali Hassan al-Majid—known, ever since he directed the gassing of the Kurds, as Chemical Ali.) An Arab woman who is a retired teacher from the southern city of Kut said, "Iraq is part of the Arab nation, not the Kurdish nation. The Kurds are guests in Iraq—and they want to kick the Arabs out?" I seldom heard any acknowledgment of the crimes that Arabs had committed against Kurds in Kirkuk, or any shame at having been the benefitters. This only deepens the sense among Kurds, especially among the deportees who have returned, that it is not possible for them to live alongside imported Arabs in Kirkuk.

The Kurdish plan for Kirkuk is absolutely clear. All the imported Arabs must leave—even those who were born in the city. The government should compensate them, and perhaps find them land and jobs in their provinces of origin, but to allow them to stay in Kirkuk would be to endorse the injustice of Arabization. After Kurdish deportees have been resettled, and the province's earlier demographic balance has been restored, the Kirkuk region will hold a census. (The 1957 census showed that the population was almost fifty per cent Kurdish.) The result of this upcoming census is a foregone conclusion to the Kurds: they will be the majority group in the province. Equally predictable is the result of the referendum that will follow: the province of Kirkuk will vote to join the autonomous region of Kurdistan, and the city will go with it.

None of this is stated in Iraq's interim constitution. Article 58, which delineates "Steps to Remedy Injustice," is purposefully vague about the future of Kirkuk. It calls for "the injustice caused by the previous regime's practices in altering the demographic character of certain regions, including Kirkuk," to be redressed. It states that "individuals newly introduced to specific regions and territories . . . may be resettled, may receive compensation from the state, may receive new land from the state near their residence in the governorate from which they came, or may receive compensation for the cost of moving to such areas." (Not "must.") The status of contested cities like Kirkuk will be deferred until after the census and a permanent constitution, "consistent with the principle of justice, taking into account the will of the people of those territories." This bland language raises more questions than it answers. Does justice require only the restoration of confiscated property, or does it also require the restoration of Kirkuk's demography to the period before Arabization? Wouldn't forcing Arabs to return to the towns "from which they came" create new injustices and perpetuate the cycle of revenge?

Although there has been nothing like the apocalyptic communal bloodshed that some predicted, several demonstrations in Kirkuk have turned violent, and Kirkuk's leaders have fallen victim to a campaign of assassination. Most of the murdered officials have been Kurds, though one was an Arab provincial councilman; a week ago, an Arab sheikh who occupied disputed lands around the village of Amshaw was ambushed and killed. Arrests are seldom made in these cases. Kurds in Kirkuk cast suspicion on Turkish intelligence agents; the Turkish government has repeatedly asserted that a Kurdish power grab in Kirkuk would be regarded as a prelude to an independent state and therefore a threat to Turkey, which has its own minority population of rebellious Kurds. In July, the Turkish foreign minister, Abdullah Gul, compared Kirkuk to Bosnia and issued a veiled warning: "Everyone is aware that this is the issue that could end up being the greatest headache for Iraq."

Hasib Rozbayani is the Kurdish deputy governor for resettlement and compensation, the official responsible for the returning refugees. Rozbayani is a leading spokesman for the emerging policy of reverse ethnic cleansing. He spent years teaching social studies and statistics in exile in Sweden, and, with an unruly head of curly hair, spectacles, and a habit of mumbling questions to himself as he talks, he has a mild professorial air. When we spoke in his living room, he was barefoot and wearing sweatpants and an untucked shirt, and he kept absently picking up the automatic pistol that lay on the sofa beside him, then startling himself and setting it down again. Propped against his stereo system was a Kalashnikov.

Rozbayani left no doubt about the future of the imported Arabs. Their departure from Kirkuk is necessary for a variety of reasons, he said, including psychosocial ones: the Arabs suffer from guilty consciences, since most of them are criminals and former Baathists, which would make them uneasy about staying; they know they don't belong in the city and have no friends among the other groups; their continued presence would be a provocation to Kurds, inciting social conflict. Moreover, unemployment is already too high in Kirkuk.

Those benefitters who haven't left

Kirkuk before the census and the referendum will not be allowed to vote there, Rozbayani said. He does not expect many Arabs to be living in Kirkuk by then. "They have to leave," he said. Imported Arabs have to leave even if no one contests their house or land, because their fault is a collective one. After the census and the referendum on the status of Kirkuk, he told me, Arabs could return to the region—for a visit.

I told Rozbayani about a couple I'd met: the husband came from central Iraq in the nineteen-sixties; the wife is an "original Arab" whose family has lived in Kirkuk for generations. Their children have grown up with playmates from a mixed Kurdish-Turkoman family next door. What should happen to this couple?

"They have to return," he said.

"The wife is a native of Kirkuk."

"She can follow him."

My questions struck Rozbayani as misplaced humanitarianism, and he threw them back at me. "Of course, I accept the idea of brothership and friendship," he assured me. "But we know openly that the Arabs have taken lands, occupied lands, they have gone to every house to investigate people, execute people, take their sons, their girls—and you would say, 'Welcome, Iraq is for all people'? It's funny, I say."

Much of Rozbayani's and other Kurds' unhappiness is directed at the American-led coalition. They expected something more than studied evenhandedness from the United States. A peshmerga now living in an abandoned house in Amshaw asked me, "Why, when the Kurds are your friends, do you now treat us just the way you treat other Iraqis, including the Republican Guard?"

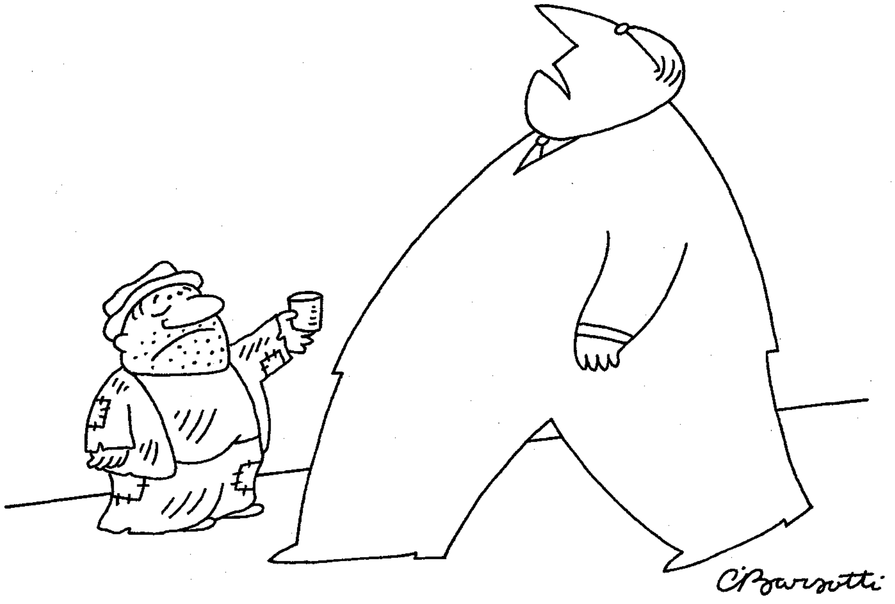
The first representative of the Coalition Provisional Authority in Kirkuk, and the most influential advocate for the city with Paul Bremer, the head of the C.P.A., was Emma Sky, a slim, brown-eyed, thirty-six-year-old Englishwoman. Sky speaks some Arabic and once worked with Palestinians in the West Bank; though she opposed the invasion of Iraq, she volunteered to join the occupation authority. Upon arriving in Kirkuk, she saw that the most urgent task was to reassure alienated Arabs and Turkomans that the triumphant attitude of their Kurdish neighbors did not mean there was no future for them here. As Sky travelled around the province, her prestige among Arabs soared. Ismail Hadidi, the deputy governor and an original Arab, gave her his highest praise: "We deal with her as if she's a man, not a woman."

Sky believes passionately that Kirkuk can be a model for an ethnically diverse Iraq. "People have to move away from this zero-sum thinking," she told me in Baghdad. "Kirkuk is where it all meets. It all comes together there. Yes, you can have a country of separate regions, where people don't have to deal with other groups. But can you have a country where people are happy with each other, where people are at ease with each other? I think Kirkuk is going to tell you what kind of country Iraq is going to be." Compared with the problems in Israel and Palestine, Sky said, Kirkuk's can be solved relatively easily. "Kirkuk you can win. Kirkuk doesn't have irreconcilable differences—yet."

Over time, many Kurds began to regard Emma Sky and the C.P.A. as biased toward Arabs. When she met the Kurdish leader Jalal Talabani in Suleimaniya, he snapped, "They call you Emma Bell." The reference was to Gertrude Bell, the British colonial official who lived and, it is said, took her life in Baghdad. Fluent in Arabic and in love with the culture, Bell was admired by large numbers of Arabs. After the First World War, she drew up the boundaries of the modern state of Iraq, in which Sunni Arabs became the holders of power and Kurds saw their dream of nationhood dissolved.

Nor did it help the Coalition's cause that its scheme for untangling and redressing grievances in Kirkuk—the Iraq Property Claims Commission, which Sky was instrumental in setting up—didn't begin to hear claims until April and still hasn't issued its first decision. Azad Shekhany, a Kurd who once directed the commission, concluded that the whole thing was an elaborate stall to keep the peace, and he put the blame on the Coalition. "I understand they don't want to send the Arabs back to their original places, but they don't want the Kurds to be unhappy as well—so they just delay everything by bureaucracy," Shekhany said.

The commission has received far fewer claims than anticipated—exactly 1,658 as of the July morning when I visited its offices, which were well-equipped and nearly empty. Two Kurdish women in billowing black robes—Jamila Safar and her mother, Khadija Namikh—were seated at a desk making a claim. In March, 1991, during the uprising in Kirkuk and the north that followed the Gulf War, Safar told me, her father died. On the day of his burial, March 13th, she and her mother returned from the cemetery to find their house surrounded by soldiers, Baath Party members, and men with masked faces who worked for Chemical Ali. "Are you Kurds or Arabs?" the men demanded. Everyone in the neighborhood was out on the street—Kurds, Arabs, and Turkomans, grouped



"Help this poor wretch, Lord."

by ethnicity. Tanks blocked the streets and helicopters circled overhead as the Kurdish men, including Safar's older brother, were bound and taken away in buses. Safar and Namikh, along with other Kurdish women and children, were loaded onto a different set of buses and driven into the mountains, where they were dropped off and told to walk north. As the two women walked, they were bombed by aircraft overhead; several neighbors died in front of them. Safar and her mother stayed at the Iranian border for three months. When they ventured back to Kirkuk, their house—along with two thousand others in their neighborhood—had been destroyed.

"Thank God, all I found was dust," Safar said. "Thank God for our safety."

A staff lawyer was filling out a lengthy form for them. "Was the house brick or clay?"

"Brick," Safar's mother said. "Finish, please. I'm sick, I can't wait."

"Do you want to take the land, or do you want compensation?" the lawyer asked.

"We want the land," Safar said.

The lawyer wrote this down, and the fact that they needed money to build a new house. "Why didn't you go to the commission for people with damaged houses in 1991?"

"I did," the mother said. "I gave them an application, but they didn't give us anything."

Ayob Shaker, an Arab man in his late thirties, came over and said hello to the two women with a shy reserve. He had once been their neighbor. On the day of the deportation, he had helped other Kurds in the area load furniture on the buses. He was also a soldier in the Republican Guard, and when he came back to Kirkuk from Baghdad after the Americans had deposed Saddam he found a group of peshmerga, including another former neighbor, occupying his house. Though Kirkuk's property-claims statute was amended recently to allow Arabs displaced after the war to make claims as well, Shaker said that his children had been threatened by the peshmerga, and he was afraid to file for compensation.

"Believe me, nobody knows for sure, but mostly it's the Kurds who are running the city," he said. "For me as an Arab, if I want a job I have to get a paper from a Kurdish party saying I'm not a criminal." Chance had brought him to this office on the same day as the two women he used to greet every morning on his way to work. He felt that the very injustice he had once seen done to them was now befalling him. "The same thing," he said. "The government did it to them. The peshmerga did it to us."

The women agreed, and there was a moment of good feeling between the old neighbors.

"Only God, and America, can solve the problem," the Arab said.

What about the new Iraqi government? I asked.

"I don't know," the mother said. "Is there a government right now or not?"

The staff lawyer finished filling out the form. The daughter smiled and said, "I think there will be justice and our case will be finished."

I asked the Arab if there would be justice in Kirkuk. He hesitated. "I don't think so," he said. "It's very difficult. Those who are now in the city don't understand each other. I am a son of Kirkuk"—an original Arab—"and for thirty-five years nobody could hurt us. Now I'm feeling upset, because of my house."

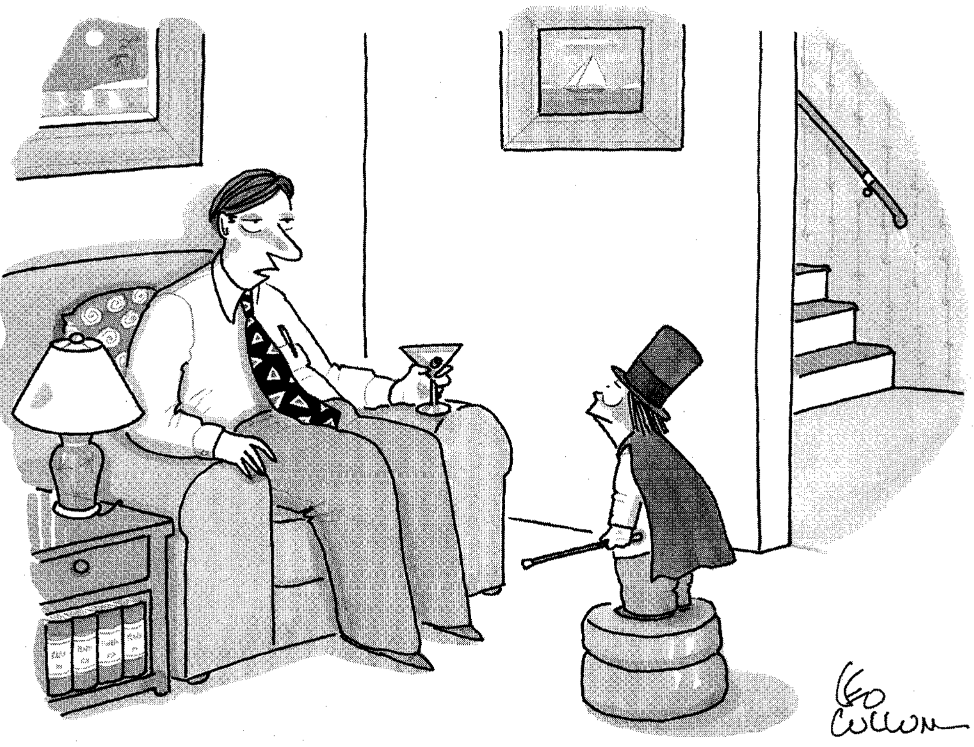
I asked the women if Kurds would ever do to Arabs what Arabs had done to Kurds. "No, they won't do that," the daughter said. "Believe me, I swear to God they won't do that."

"They've done *more* than the Arabs," Shaker said.

The daughter stiffened and eyed her former neighbor coldly. "How is that?" she asked.

"I know one person who made half a tribe run away from their houses in the city," he responded.

The warm feeling was gone. The daughter pointed out that Shaker had already forgotten what had happened to the Kurds in Kirkuk. Abruptly, she excused herself and helped her mother out of the Iraq Property Claims Commission.



"Daddy doesn't know any magic tricks. Daddy knows accounting tricks."

Because Kirkuk isn't yet the scene of open combat, the city remains a hidden flaw in the broken Iraqi landscape. But what is now a local dispute between neighbors will soon become one of the greatest obstacles to making Iraq democratic and keeping it whole. In the summer of 2003, I had a conversation with Barham Salih, who was then the prime minister of the regional government in Suleimaniya. A strong supporter of the American invasion and of Kurdish participation in a democratic and federal Iraq, he was also mindful of his constituents' ingrained suspicion of Baghdad and their longing for independence. For twelve years, Suleimaniya was one of the two capitals of Iraqi Kurdistan, a de-facto independent state under the protection of the Allied no-fly zone. A generation of Kurds grew up speaking no Arabic and feeling no connection to Iraq—and the idea of rejoining a country that not long ago visited genocide and ethnic cleansing on Kurds is, understandably, a hard sell.

"I want to assure my kids and the new generations to come that the new Iraq will be fundamentally different," Salih said. "If the Arabs of Iraq do not have the courage to come to terms with the terrible past that we have had and make right those terrible injustices that befell my people, I would have extreme difficulty convincing the doubters in Suleimaniya's bazaar that Iraq is our future."

I went to see Salih again this past June in Baghdad, on his first day as deputy prime minister of the newly sovereign Iraqi interim government. After a year of occupation and insurgency, his mood was darker, and his interpretation of the interim constitution on Kirkuk was uncompromising. "The indigenous people of Kirkuk, the original communities of Kirkuk, should be the ones who decide the fate of Kirkuk—not those who were brought by Saddam or any outside power," he said. The imported Arabs were victims, too, "tools for a vile policy, for Saddam wanted to create the environment for a permanent civil war between Kurds and Arabs." But, Salih added, "Kirkuk is not Bosnia, and in fact the Kurdish leadership has demonstrated the utmost restraint in the way that it has handled Kirkuk. In Bosnia, you'd have seen civil war."

I asked Rowsch Shaways, a Kurd and one of two vice-presidents in the interim government, what would happen if the imported Arabs refused to leave Kirkuk. Would they be loaded into trucks and driven south to Basra and Kut?

"Well, there should be a continuous campaign to persuade them," he said.

Wouldn't the attempt to force Arabs out of Kirkuk lead to reprisals against Kurds living in Arab regions of Iraq? "No, it's a different situation," he said. "Kurds who are living in the south, they were coming here very normally, not through a campaign of changing ethnicity." After the effects of Saddam's ethnic cleansing have been reversed, "everybody can live where he wants," Shaways said. "But before that you have to reverse the unjust policy that was done to strengthen the Baath Party and to change the ethnic composition of some regions." The Americans have waited too long to resolve the problem of Kirkuk, he said, adding, "This is my opinion: Kirkuk is a part of Kurdistan."

Of the top Kurdish officials, I imagined that the person who would find the question of Kirkuk most vexing was Bakhtiar Amin. He grew up in Imam Qasim, a once beautiful Kurdish neighborhood near the citadel, where homes with spiralled Ottoman columns have been allowed to decay to the point of collapse. Amin and his family were expelled from Kirkuk during Arabization; his relatives were jailed and tortured. Amin, who is forty-six, lived in exile for years, working as a human-rights activist in Europe and founding the International Alliance for Justice. Now he is the first human-rights minister of a sovereign Iraqi government. But, when we sat down in his spacious Baghdad office to talk about justice in Kirkuk, Amin made it clear that he was speaking as a Kurd.

After recounting the history of Kurdish oppression in great detail, the minister warned me that the situation in Kirkuk was becoming explosive. The Americans, who were overburdened by the daily chaos in Baghdad, Falluja, and Najaf, "want to keep the calm there—the calm of a cemetery." Amin added, "It's important not to be naïve with your foes and Machiavellian with your friends. Patience has its limits for victims as well." The only solution, he insisted, was to return the demography of Kirkuk to what it was before Arabization, and help Arabs to resettle in the south.

I asked how he would answer an Arab youth who said, "Mr. Human Rights Minister, Kirkuk is my home. I don't have another. Why must I leave?" Amin replied that he would introduce the young Arab to a young Kurd who had lost his house and grown up in a tent, and whose brother or sister had died of starvation or cold. He said that he would tell the young Arab, "Your father, your mom, they are from a different area and they came here and they took these people's house, and this is what they did to those children. And I will help you to have a decent life where your parents came from."

Earlier this year, Kurdish leaders had considerable success in shaping the language of Iraq's interim constitution, which enshrined the rights of minority groups and envisioned a federalist republic with significant regional autonomy. Over the past few months, however, many Kurds have lost confidence in the effort to create a unified Iraq. They are increasingly alienated from their American allies, who always seem more ready to soothe the recalcitrant Arabs than the dependable Kurds. Several Kurdish politicians told me that a repetition of 1975, when the U.S. withdrew its support for the Kurds and abandoned them to the Baathist regime, now seems entirely possible. In May, the U.S. fuelled such suspicions when it yielded to a demand of Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani and left out any mention of the interim constitution in the U.N. Security Council resolution that blessed Iraq's restored sovereignty. When it became clear that Kurds would get neither the Presidency nor the Prime Ministership, Kurdish politicians, including Barham Salih, were so incensed that they briefly withdrew from Baghdad to the north. On June 1st, the two Kurdish leaders, Masoud Barzani and Jalal Talabani, sent a cri de cœur to President Bush that was subsequently made public. "Ever since liberation, we have detected a bias against Kurdistan from the American authorities for reasons that we cannot comprehend," they wrote, and warned that if the interim constitution "is abrogated, the Kurdistan Regional Government will have no choice but to refrain from participating in the central government and its institutions, not to take part in the national elections, and to bar representatives of the central government from Kurdistan."

The episode had the feel of an extreme reaction born of extreme experience, a kind of historical neurosis in which Iraq's Kurds and Arabs both are trapped. Samir Shakir Sumaidaie, a former Governing Council member who was recently appointed Iraq's Ambassador to the U.N., said that he understood why the Kurds had reacted so strongly. "I cannot blame a Kurd for feeling anger," he said. "But I can plead with him to contain his anger, because angry people often do stupid

"It's not just my side of the story. It's my and my life coach's side of the story."

things, and they end up hurting themselves. Arabs, on the other hand, must acknowledge the injustice that has been done to the Kurds. By acknowledging the injustice, you take the poison out of the system. I've told this to Arabs in Kirkuk: we must admit what was done in the name of Arab nationalism to the Kurds, and of which you were perhaps the unwitting instrument." The Kurds' anger, he said, will cool only when they begin to see justice done—"especially for the families that suffered most in Kirkuk." When Sumaidaie makes these arguments to his fellow Iraqi Arabs, he told me, the response is grudging. "Nationalism ignites nationalism," Sumaidaie said. "I think we should get away from nationalism and move toward humanism."

On September 9th, Masoud Barzani escalated his rhetoric again, saying, "Kirkuk is the heart of Kurdistan, and we are ready to wage a war in order to preserve its identity." A self-described Iraqi liberal who is an official of the interim government told me that more and more leaders are reacting to Kurdish threats with an attitude of "good riddance." Keeping the Kurds happy, they think, might not be worth the cost. "The truth of the matter is, the Arabs of this country—eighty per cent of the population—are getting tired of these threats of secession," he said. "And one day their answer will be: 'Secede.' "

Nevertheless, during several visits to Kirkuk, I kept meeting citizens of every ethnicity who still wanted to live together and were willing to surrender part of their own historical claim to the city in order to coexist peacefully with other groups. The idea of a multi-ethnic city, I realized, is not just a desperate piece of cheerful public relations from American and British officials.

This summer, I met Muhammad Abbas, an Arab in his twenties, whose family had moved to Kirkuk when he was six; his father had been sent to the city to fulfill his military service. Abbas described the hurt of losing Kurdish friends after the war. "I don't want to leave, because I've gotten used to this place, to the way of living here," he said. He had recently been detained overnight by Kurdish police officials for having no ID card. "Maybe if this had happened during Saddam's time I would have been locked up for days," he said. "And a Kurd might have been tortured." Abbas said he thought that Arabs and Kurds could live together in Kirkuk if the politicians allowed them to do so. "We're human beings and they're human beings," he said. "In my opinion, the city of Kirkuk—the Kurds have every right to it. They have more rights in Kirkuk and they deserve Kirkuk. But still, we can't just go anywhere and leave the house. Where would we live?"

On the other side of town, in the neighborhood of Imam Qasim, I met a young Kurdish engineer named Sardar Muhammad. He and his wife and children share a small house with his two brothers and their families. "If there had been no war, in fifteen years you would have found no Kurds at all in Kirkuk," he said. When the American invasion seemed imminent, Muhammad went down into his basement and cut a square out of the plaster wall, behind which there was a concealed room. He planned to hide there if the Baathists started rounding up young Kurdish men, as they had done in 1991. Instead, the Baathists fled the city. Since the removal of Saddam, Muhammad's family has built a new outhouse and extended the kitchen, and they filled it with new appliances. "It wasn't that I didn't have the money," Muhammad said. "But I wasn't sure I would keep this house. I didn't know if I'd need the money in the future for food." A few years ago, his wife dropped out of school, because there was no chance for a Kurdish woman who didn't correct her nationality to find a job. After the liberation, she reënrolled and obtained her degree. "Before, we didn't know when we'd be arrested or expelled," Muhammad said. "Now we have hopes for the future."

As for the Arabs who had once enjoyed rights and privileges that were denied his family, Muhammad was of two minds. It would be easier for everyone if they left. "But their kids, when they're born here, there's a kind of relationship to the land, and it's not those kids' fault that they're in love with the place where they were born," he said. "It's unfair for them to have to leave." The only reason for Kirkuk to join Kurdistan, he said, was that Arabs didn't treat Kurds fairly. If the new government in Baghdad could insure that all Iraqi citizens would be treated equally, he would gladly live under its flag instead of in Kurdistan.

Kirkuk has suffered inordinately from bad ideas, and the old ones have engendered some that are new: the idea that the historical clock can be turned back forty years, or that Iraq can be carved up among its Sunni, Shia, and Kurds without enormous bloodshed and countless individual tragedies. The weakest idea in Iraq may be the idea of Iraq itself. As Barham Salih told me, "There is no Iraqi identity that I can push my people to today. I want to have an Iraqi identity, but it does not exist." Samir Shakir Sumaidaie said, "To get away from what Saddam did, where ethnic identity is what mattered most, to a society where citizenship is what matters—that transition is not an easy transition. We have to make it, though."

The obsession with ethnic identity may be the ultimate legacy of Saddam's rule, his diabolical revenge on his countrymen. Nowhere can this be more strongly felt than in Kirkuk. "Saddam is gone, but we're not through with him," an Arab there said. "Even if he's not here, it's like he planted problems for the future."

On my last evening in Kirkuk, I went to see the citadel with Luna Dawood. She wore high-heeled sandals; although her hair was uncovered, she had pinned it up as a gesture of respect. She had visited the citadel only once, in 1988; after the residents were removed and the houses destroyed, she developed an aversion to the place.

At sunset, we made our way through the souk, past little Kurdish shops that sold bread, yogurt, and ancient-looking tools, and then we followed an alley that led us to the top of the plateau. The citadel spread out before us, a vast and nearly empty field of dirt and dead grass and broken stones and scattered monuments. A pack of wild dogs roamed menacingly, and the sole human inhabitants were an old Turkoman and his family. They were squatting in the marble dwelling of a long-departed imam. The Turkoman told us that he had once lived in a house a few yards away. He brought his family back after the liberation of Iraq, and somehow he had been allowed to stay. "This is my original place," he said. "I'm a poor man; I have nowhere to go. Where should the poor man go?"

We crossed the field, toward an octagonal gold-and-blue tower that an Ottoman pasha had built for his dead daughter, and the ancient clay minaret of the Tomb of the Prophets. Dawood, who had been walking in stunned silence, suddenly said of her fellow-Kirkukis, "They are stupid. They destroyed their history." At the far end of the citadel, perched above the dead riverbed, was the abandoned house of the Turkoman woman who sold shoes and purses in the souk. Behind it, the orange ball of the sun was sinking. On one of the house's walls, someone had painted, "Long live the Turkomans—they are crowns on the heads of the Kurds." There was graffiti on other walls, too: "Kirkuk is the heart of Kurdistan," "The citadel of Kirkuk is the sign of the Kurds," and "The citadel of Kirkuk is a witness of its Turkomanness, whatever the conditions." On the courtyard wall of another half-ruined house, someone had painted, "The Turkoman people are brothers with the Kurdish people," but someone else had painted over "Kurdish people."

"Ghosts are here," Dawood murmured. "I can hear them in the night. Under the ground, my mother said when we were children, there's a road from Kirkuk to Baghdad. Underground, there's a door somewhere—for people who wanted to escape Kirkuk."

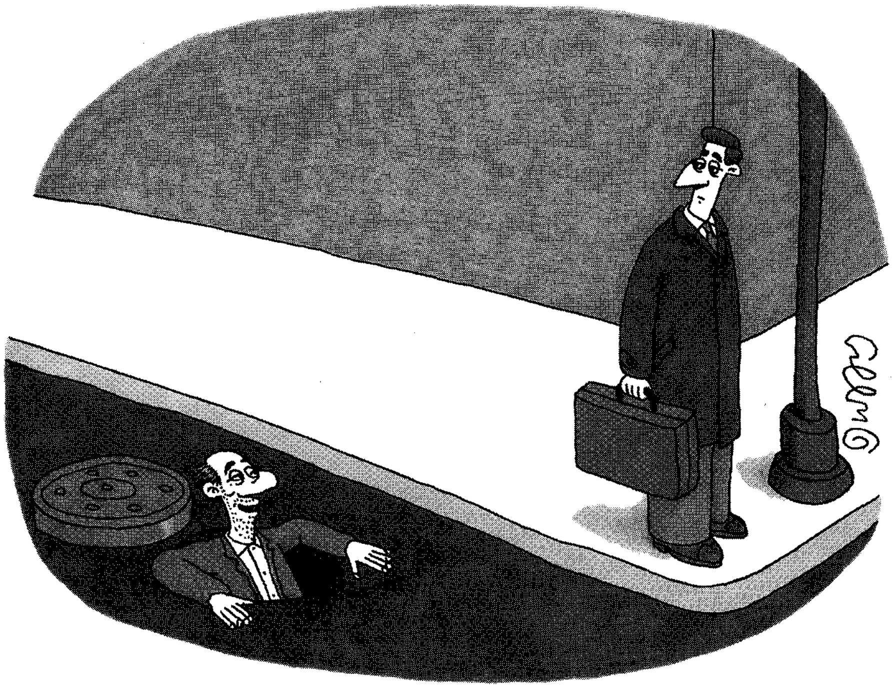
Her disquiet grew as we approached the Tomb of the Prophets. "This isn't the citadel I know. I told you, I came once before. But there was a road, and people. I don't even know where that road was." She said that she had come with three friends, one of them a Muslim, after she had a dream about the prophet Daniel.

We stood before the entrance to the alleged tomb of Daniel and Ezra. Down below, in the city, muezzins were beginning the evening call. I went inside the bare chamber and waited for Dawood to follow, but at the doorway she recoiled with a muted cry. I followed her out.

"It was gold!" she exclaimed. When she visited the shrine after her dream, the tombs and walls had been covered in gold leaf; all of it had been scraped off. "Now I'm feeling depressed," Dawood said. "I can see the difference between that time and this visit. I can't feel the holy mystery of the place. I'm even afraid to go inside."

It was getting dark, and we started back. Dawood was silent again. Just before the opening to a path that descended to the souk, there was a square hole in the ground. She stopped. "I remember the well we just saw. I remember there were trees. Now I'm remembering—I visited this place as a child."

Dusk had settled over the souk. The market stalls were closing up amid the last calls of prices, and the sweepers were cleaning up the day's trash. Dawood spoke so quietly that she might have been a ghost herself. "What is a human being worth, if they steal such a place? Right now, being human means nothing to me. I'm very sorry you brought me to this place. I shouldn't have come." ♦



"Aye, laddie! 'Tis a poor man who has na' heard the pipes!"

A LETTER TO GENERAL Z

War, Your Grace, is watching the dice roll.
Lucky today; tomorrow—a black hole.
—"*The Song of the Siege of La Rochelle.*"

General, I fold. Our maps are crap.
The North is at the Pole, it isn't here.
And the Equator's wider than that stripe
you sport. The Front is South, so very far
the wireless turns our orders from the top
to a sort of boogie-woogie. What *is* clear

is that this hand is finished and we're spent.
The roads are shot, so they can't send reserves
or change the linen. I don't sleep too sound
on sandpaper. It's getting on my nerves.
Was the Temple of Minerva ever stained
by such pollution? And we've sat ourselves,

General, so long here in the mud
the King of Worms thinks Christmas has come.
The cuckoo's meant to tell us—God forbid—
how many years are left, but he plays dumb.
Merci is probably the word we need,
that no one's shooting at us. Our own guns

ogle the earth, their barrels pointing down.
Our cannonballs are going soft. It's just
the buglers who pull out their copper horns
from cases, like the practiced masturbators
they are, and, lifting them, elicit sounds
like squirts with all that polishing. The brass,

in mismatched suits and breeches, shuffle round
oblivious to rules and roll calls.
Privates undercover on waste ground
explore each other's private underworlds
while the crimson flag is lowered by our friend
the sergeant, who's been drilling someone else.

•

General! Outnumbered or surrounded,
I have always fought our battles to the full.
The only lucky star I ever wanted
was that one on your cap. But now I feel
I'm nothing but the nail that was beheaded
by hammers in the age-old fairy tale.

General, sadly, we are well aware
we only live the once. And to postpone
the search for further proof we'll down our beer
to the very dregs in this our humble den,
though life goes by too quickly to ignore
the gist of it until it's almost gone.

General. Only souls need bodies,
and souls are not inclined to Schadenfreude.
It wasn't strategy or skill that led us
hereabouts but the urge to get together.
Can't make head or tail of your own business?
Butt into someone else's, much better.

General, I'm shaking. Is it terror,
cold, or misery? Is it shock or shame?
Or want of sex, specifically the fairer?
Healers, hypnotists, don't waste your time
on me again. The battalion cook has never
known his salt from sugar, let's blame him.

General, point is it's a cul-de-sac.
It's the revenge of space upon the strong.
Our pikes are rusting, and the mere fact
we have them doesn't mean there's anyone
to point pikes at. Our shadows never walk
farther than we, not even at sundown.

•

General! You know, I'm not a coward.
Open the dossier, look at my file. Gunfire
never bothered me much, and I play my cards
the way they fall. I won't go any higher.
Fix the ace of diamonds to my coat,
for I was wondering if I might retire,

General. I do not wish to die
for various monarchs whom—I must admit—
I've never seen. Clearly my mind's eye
was shut when they were coming down my street.
To *live* for them, mind you, is something I'm
twice as disinclined to contemplate.

General, I'm done with everything.
I'm bored with this crusade. I'm sick and tired

of the view congealing on my windowpane:
mountains, coppice, stream. The world outside
grows so familiar that the world within
can torture me at leisure. And indeed,

General, I hardly think the unit
will be much weakened by the loss of *moi.*
No one will notice anyway, admit it,
I'm not the soloist, this orchestra
won't miss me. Break my sabre into bits,
unwind my trumpet, immolate my gear.

•

No bird in sight but all I hear is chatter.
A sniper, pining with a spiritual thirst,
perches on a branch and reads his orders
one more time—unless it's an epistle
from Mommy or his sweetheart. Out of boredom
he draws the scene, takes aim with a pencil.

Time will appreciate you, General,
your squares and charges and battalions.
You'll be a bust at every Army school,
your rides and victories and battle scenes
the stuff of legend, elevating all,
opening eyes, mouths, throats, veins.

General, I feel duty-bound to say
you are a wingèd lion forever stuck
at the threshold of a certain doorway.
And in this sense you are indeed our rock.
It's not as if you died or went away
defeated. You were never in the deck.

General, let them send me for trial!
I want to make my case before the court:
that the suffering of mankind as a whole
equals one absurdity. Let that
become a thing of flesh, and may that vessel
loom as something black on something white.

General, I'll tell you one more thing.
I'm using you, or, rather, what you are,
to rhyme with "funeral," as I was thinking
it was getting pretty close to my own hour,
but the Lord's not yet done with separating
chaff from wheat, so I won't do it here.

•

In an abandoned lot where through the night
two lanterns burn and the old trains decay,
I start unbuttoning this jester's suit
and tear the stripes and shoulder straps away.
Motionless I freeze in the twin sights
of a Leitz camera and the Gorgon's eye.

Night. My thoughts are of a certain she,
wonderful within—in profile, too.
Everything that's happening to me
happens above the rooftops but below
the heavens. And I can't remotely see
it's anything insulting to you.

•

General, you are not there. Tonight,
as usual, my meaningless address
is meant for the great void on whose far side
begins a place of utter soundlessness.
Any map that you or I could read
shows it is endless and does not exist.

General. If you hear me nonetheless,
it means there may be deep in that abyss
of nullity and silence an oasis,
to which a horseman rides, and the rider, thus,
is me. Onward, faster, I spur my horse,
General, charging into nothingness.

General, I, who always was as tough
as lions, leave a stain upon our banner.
Even a house of cards can be enough
for beasts. I drain my glass and fold this letter.
For such as we, who lived through the great bluff,
life leaves nothing but a scrap of paper.

—*Joseph Brodsky*
(Autumn, 1968)

(Translated, from the Russian, by Glyn Maxwell.)

PROFILES

THE PRANKSTER

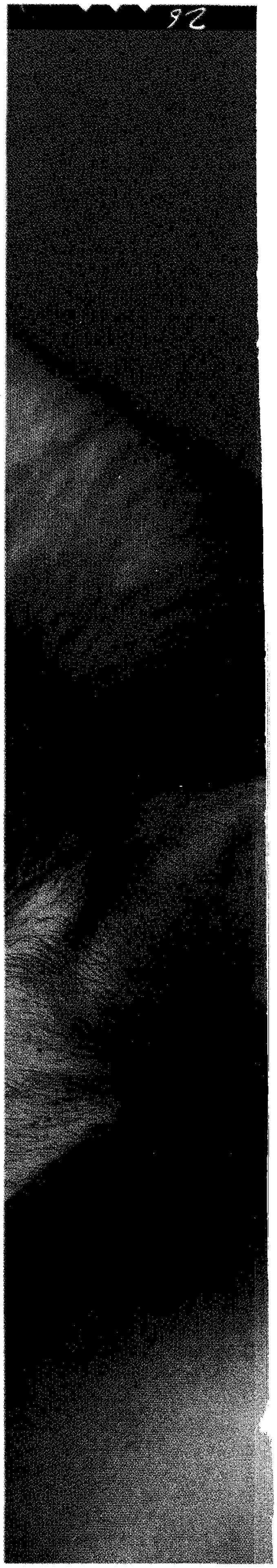
Maurizio Cattelan's art provokes more than laughter.

BY CALVIN TOMKINS

Ten o'clock on a May morning in Paris, by the École des Beaux-Arts. Maurizio Cattelan, the world's only punctual artist, is slightly late, but the sun is warm, the breeze is cool, and vividly dressed art students crowd through a narrow gate in the tall iron grille that separates the École's courtyard from the Rue Bonaparte. My wife's mobile phone rings. It is Cattelan, calling from his bicycle to say that he's three minutes away. Three minutes later, he glides to a soundless stop beside us. Cattelan is Italian. Tall and lean in his jeans and black T-shirt, he has close-cropped dark hair and a long, quizzical face anchored by an auspicious Roman nose. He wheels his bike into the courtyard, chains it to a stand, and looks around at the architecture. "Not bad," he says, whistling softly.

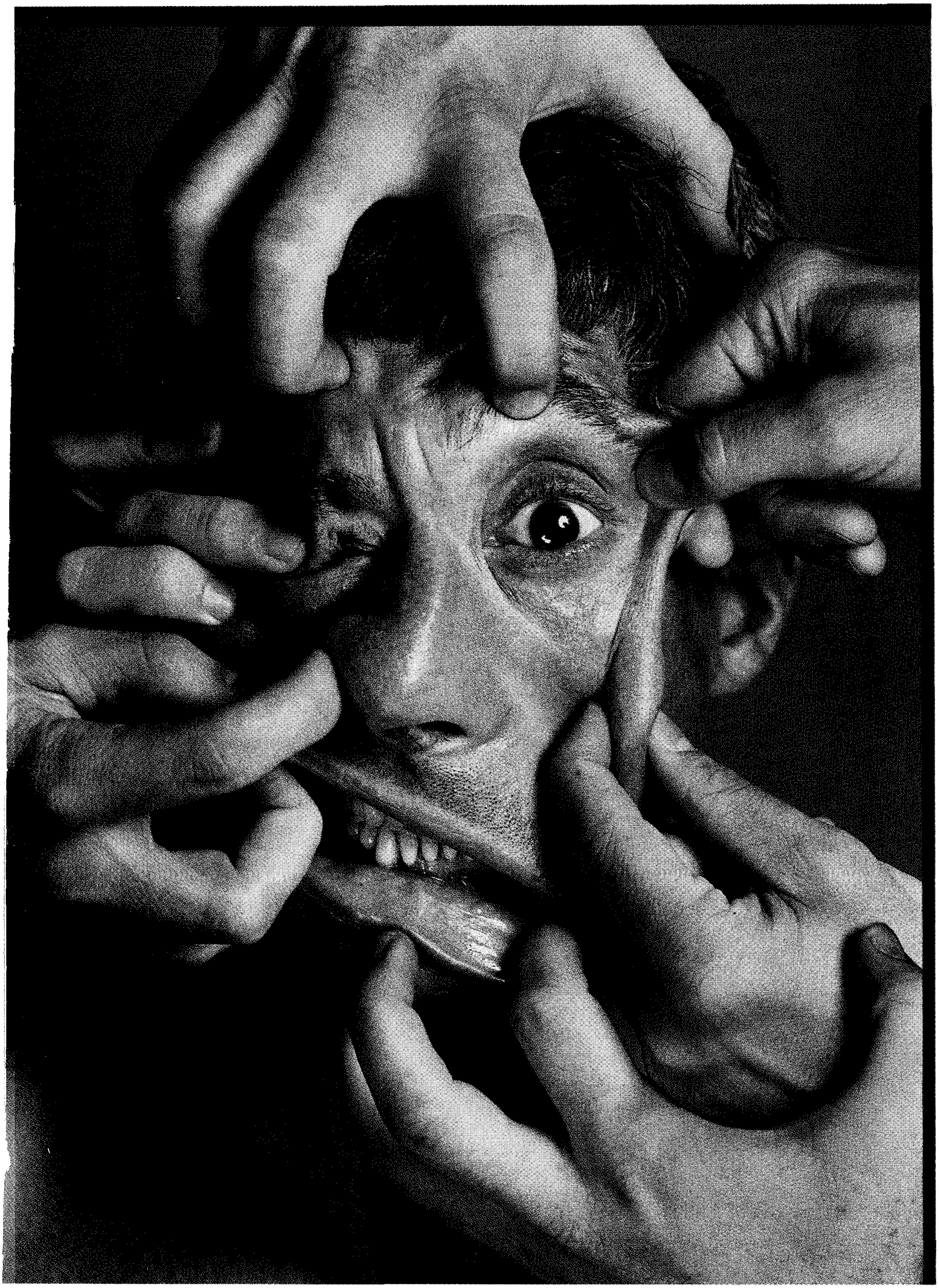
One of the new international, post-studio artists who go from place to place installing singular and often highly disconcerting works of art, Cattelan is here to inspect a space that has been offered to him for his latest project. The piece is scheduled to go on view in early October, in a show organized by the Musée Moderne de la Ville de Paris, but it will take place at a venue outside the museum because Cattelan wanted it to be in a setting that "you go into and come out of." Lucio Zotti, an old friend from Milan who collaborates on many of Cattelan's projects, recommended the seventeenth-century chapel at the École des Beaux-Arts, and two curators from the Musée Moderne, Angeline Scherf and Lauren Bosse, are on hand to show it to him. After brisk handshakes in the French manner, they lead us through an arch and, via a side door, into an ancient, dark, somewhat cluttered chapel with a very high ceiling, where we are joined a few minutes later by Henry-Claude Cousseau, the director of the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts. Cousseau, a distinguished-looking man in an expensive sports jacket, gives us what the Michelin guide calls "*un peu d'histoire*" regarding the chapel. Commissioned originally in 1608 by Marguerite de Valois, the divorced wife of King Henry IV (she was called La Reine Margot), it became, after the French Revolution, a public museum housing important works of French sculpture. In 1836, it was awarded to the École des Beaux-Arts, and it has been used ever since as a repository for plaster casts of medieval and Renaissance sculptures, which students here still study and draw, and for copies of Italian Renaissance paintings sent home by French winners of the Prix de Rome.

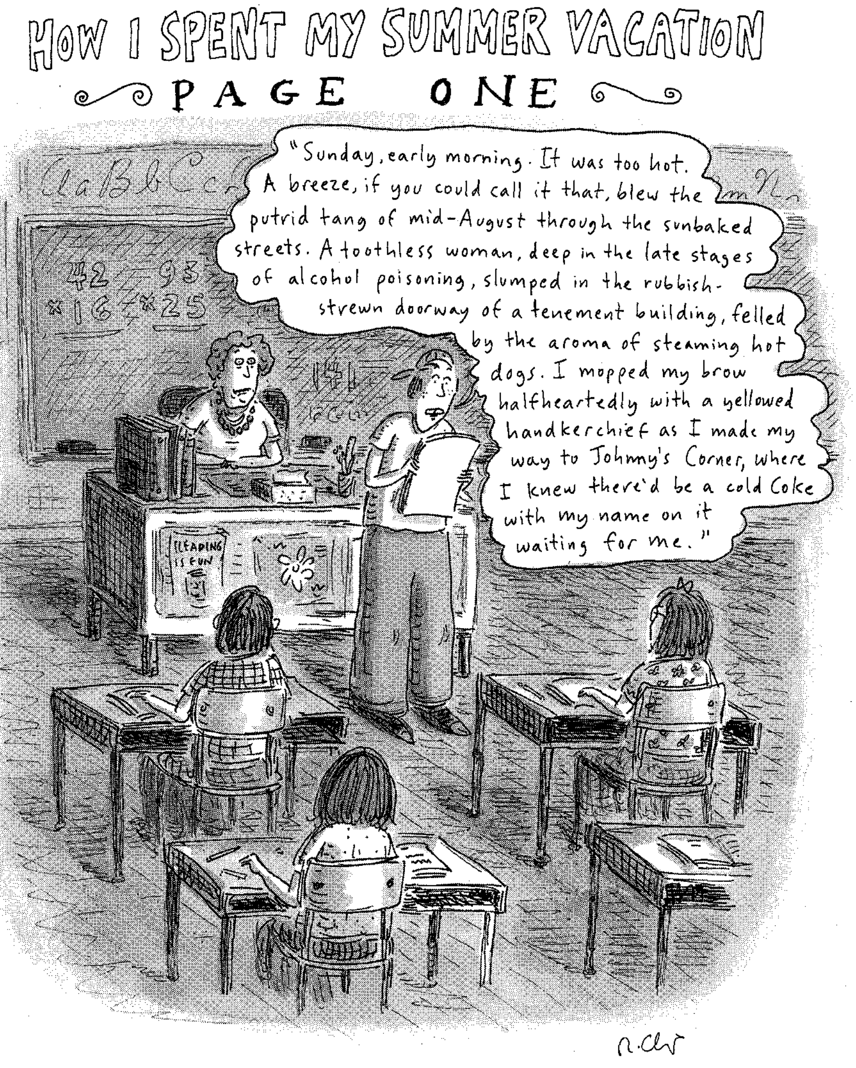
Cattelan lopes around the long, narrow space, taking everything in—replicas of Michelangelo's sculptures for the Medici tombs, of Verrocchio's gigantic equestrian statue of Bartolomeo Colleoni in Venice, of Ghiberti's doors for the Baptistery in Florence. Dutiful copies of paintings by Masaccio, Raphael, Carpaccio, Ghirlandajo, and others cover one long wall, bracketed at either end by Michelangelo's "Last Judgment" and Giotto's frescoes for the Arena Chapel in Padua, Cattelan's home town. A stranger to modern art, the chapel doesn't know what it's in for. Nor does Cousseau, who has agreed to let Cattelan use the space without knowing precisely what he plans to put in it. This is brave of him, considering some of the artist's completed projects: "La Nona Ora," for example, a full-size wax sculpture of Pope John Paul II in papal regalia but lying on his side, crushed to the ground by a jagged meteorite; or "Him," an equally lifelike Adolf Hitler,



PHOTOGRAPH BY RICHARD AVEDON

"I am not a conceptual artist!" Cattelan protests. "I don't have thinking."




HOW I SPENT MY SUMMER VACATION
PAGE ONE
Aa Bb Cc
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42 93
×16 ×25
READING IS FUN
"Sunday, early morning. It was too hot. A breeze, if you could call it that, blew the putrid tang of mid-August through the sunbaked streets. A toothless woman, deep in the late stages of alcohol poisoning, slumped in the rubbish-strewn doorway of a tenement building, felled by the aroma of steaming hot dogs. I mopped my brow halfheartedly with a yellowed handkerchief as I made my way to Johnny's Corner, where I knew there'd be a cold Coke with my name on it waiting for me."

reduced in size and kneeling in prayer. Just last spring, Cattelan confronted the city of Milan with the spectacle of three adolescent boys with ropes around their necks, hanging from a branch of an oak tree in a public square.

Since the early nineteen-nineties, when Cattelan's work began appearing in big, international group shows, he has been variously described as a jokester, a sensationalist, a troublemaker, a conceptual artist, and an innovator of unrivalled originality. Cattelan likes to say that his installations provoke debate rather than controversy, but the hanging children upset one Milanese so much that he got a ladder, climbed the tree, and cut two of them down. At that point, the man fell out of the tree and was carted off to the hospital with a mild concussion; the fire department, called in to cope with an increasingly large and restive crowd, cut down the third one. There was plenty of talk about this piece, which was on view officially for only twenty-seven hours, but which drew headlines in the Italian press for several days. The mayor and the city's cultural commission, having authorized it, were obliged to defend their decision at a special session of the City Hall Council, according to Cattelan's friend Massimiliano Gioni, who, as director of the Nicola Trussardi Foundation, in Milan, had commissioned the art work. Gioni told me that a neighborhood mother taped an open letter to the tree saying she regretted the loss of the art work, because it had called attention to the problems that real children face growing up in Milan; others wrote comments on her letter during the next few days, and the debate, if that's what you'd call it, was still going on two weeks later. Cattelan, whose English is serviceable but hesitant, resists discussing the ideas behind his work. He has said only that the piece, to him, was "like an act of love."

On the day of our visit to the École des Beaux-Arts, only a few people were aware that his new piece, called "Now," would be a life-size sculpture of John Fitzgerald Kennedy lying in a coffin. The two curators from the Musée Moderne knew, along with their colleague Hans-Ulrich Obrist, and so did Laura Hoptman, the curator of contemporary art at the Carnegie Museum of Art in Pittsburgh, where a second version of "Now" will go on view when the Carnegie International Exhibition opens, on October 8th, and of course his friend Lucio Zotti, whom the artist describes as his "spiritual consultant, the closest person to me." But Cattelan wanted it kept secret from the rumor-hungry art world, to preserve the impact of its first appearance. "After that, it will lead a different life," he told me. "I hope it will still be a good piece in three months." Cattelan often worries that his art works will fail. Many of them have been failures, in his view. His sculptures depend on the power of images to embody social issues. "I see that art has a great potential to refer to a broader debate, to go out there and reach an incredible audience," he has said. "And if my work can't do that, well, it's useless." This time, he confided, "I've never had such doubt in myself." He sees the fallen President as "a kind of secular saint." Not someone to be worshipped or idolized, that is, but someone who represented many things about America and American life which Europeans admired. To Cattelan, who was born in 1960, Kennedy's death symbolizes the loss of hope. At the moment, however, he seemed to be almost comically uncertain about the piece. "Am I doing something wrong, because I'm not American?" he asked us. "I don't know anything, I wasn't there, I'm too young. But, still, he represents hope. Kennedy belongs to everybody, I'm sorry."

The following morning, we went by taxi to Clichy, on the outskirts of Paris, to see the model of J.F.K. Like many post-studio artists, Cattelan delegates the fabrication of his art works to others. The Kennedy figure was being made by Daniel Druet, a master of moulage who executes many of the models for the

Musée Grevin, a wax museum in Paris; he had previously done several figures for Cattelan, including the Pope, Hitler, and the model Stephanie Seymour, whose portrait was commissioned by her husband, Peter Brandt. (Cattelan got Druet to do a wax bust of her, which he had mounted, trophylike, on a wooden wall plaque.) An artist-craftsman of the old school, dressed in a full-length white smock, Druet ushered us into his studio, on the second floor of a small industrial building, where he is assisted by a young man who does the casting and a young woman who puts in the hair, strand by strand. Druet does everything else—sculpts the heads and bodies in plaster, paints the skin after it has been cast in wax, and handles all the finishing touches. Photomontages on the walls showed some of his famous subjects: Gérard Depardieu, François Mitterrand, Charles de Gaulle. Harpsichord music played on the stereo; a fine layer of plaster dust coated the floor. Cattelan went off with Druet to the back room for a first, private look at the new work. After a few minutes he reappeared, and gestured for us to come in.

Kennedy was lying on a low pallet in the middle of the room, face up, dressed in a black pin-striped suit and black shoes. The skin tones hadn't been painted yet—Cattelan had expected they would be—but the handsome Irish features were instantly recognizable, under a bushy head of hair. Cattelan wanted to know what we thought. I suggested that the hair was slightly off, a little too brown, perhaps, and too unruly. It also struck me that the material of the suit wasn't quite right—it looked very lightweight. Druet seemed pained. He said the material was very expensive. He brought out photographs of J.F.K. attending public functions and press conferences in just such a suit. For the next hour, Cattelan studied the model from every angle, discussing it with Druet in a mixture of French and English. (Cattelan claims not to speak French, though he clearly understands the language; he had brought along a young employee from his Paris gallery to translate.) Several times, he went off to talk on his cell phone, in Italian, to Lucio Zotti, who had made many visits from Milan to Paris to check on Druet's progress. Zotti, it seemed, was furious about something. "Lucio is becoming more secretive than myself," Cattelan explained later. "He doesn't think you should be here."

On the way back in the taxi, Cattelan was disappointed that the face had not yet been painted, but he thought that the likeness was good and that the problems with the hair and the suit would be remedied. "I'm still considering whether the eyes should be open or shut," he said. Why would they be open? I inquired. He considered the question, laughed, and said, "I don't know." I brought out my tape recorder. "Now it gets serious," he muttered, sinking down in the seat. "An interview. Will it be American style, with hoods?"

I wanted to know about the thought process that had led to a sculpture of J.F.K. in a coffin. "But I am not a conceptual artist!" Cattelan protested. "I don't have thinking." After some further evasive tactics, he allowed that the idea of using Kennedy had been in his head for about three years. "Why? Because he's a kind of icon, even if he's not. He has all the elements. He had a fantastic life, a mixture of society, politics, so many elements. But Kennedy is so difficult to touch. I mean, every time you have a loss of hope, Kennedy comes to my mind. Now it is more contemporary than ever, don't you think?" Was that because the current American President is—"such a jerk?" Cattelan said, finishing my question. "Ah-h," he chortled, pointing at me. "No, but everything now is so black, you want to have something to hold on to. The fact that once there was someone like him makes you hope there must be another one somewhere." For three years, he went on, "we had Kennedy in all sorts of situations and positions. Kennedy as an outcast, for example, like a homeless person. But then, last January, I said to myself, 'Oh, my God, he has to be in a coffin.' The idea just clicked. It's so silent, so polished, what can you say? When you find a solution like that, when you finalize the image, it's unpayable—I mean priceless, like pure orgasm." The coffin had not yet been chosen, he said. It will be a regulation wooden coffin, with no top, nothing to come between viewer and icon.

Unlike legions of conceptualists who have bored us with variations on the Duchampian mantra that art is a mental act, and that the artist's ideas, rather than any mere artifacts which may (or may not) come out of them, are what count, Cattelan has given us a succession of startling and unforgettable visual images. He is also our reigning artist-provocateur, and the fact that his images make us laugh can get in the way of his being taken seriously. Cattelan's earlier work, which includes a lot of taxidermied animals and animal skeletons—dogs, donkeys, an ostrich, a domestic cat as big as a dinosaur, full-size horses suspended in midair—used to strike people as funny and outlandish, good for a laugh but not much more.

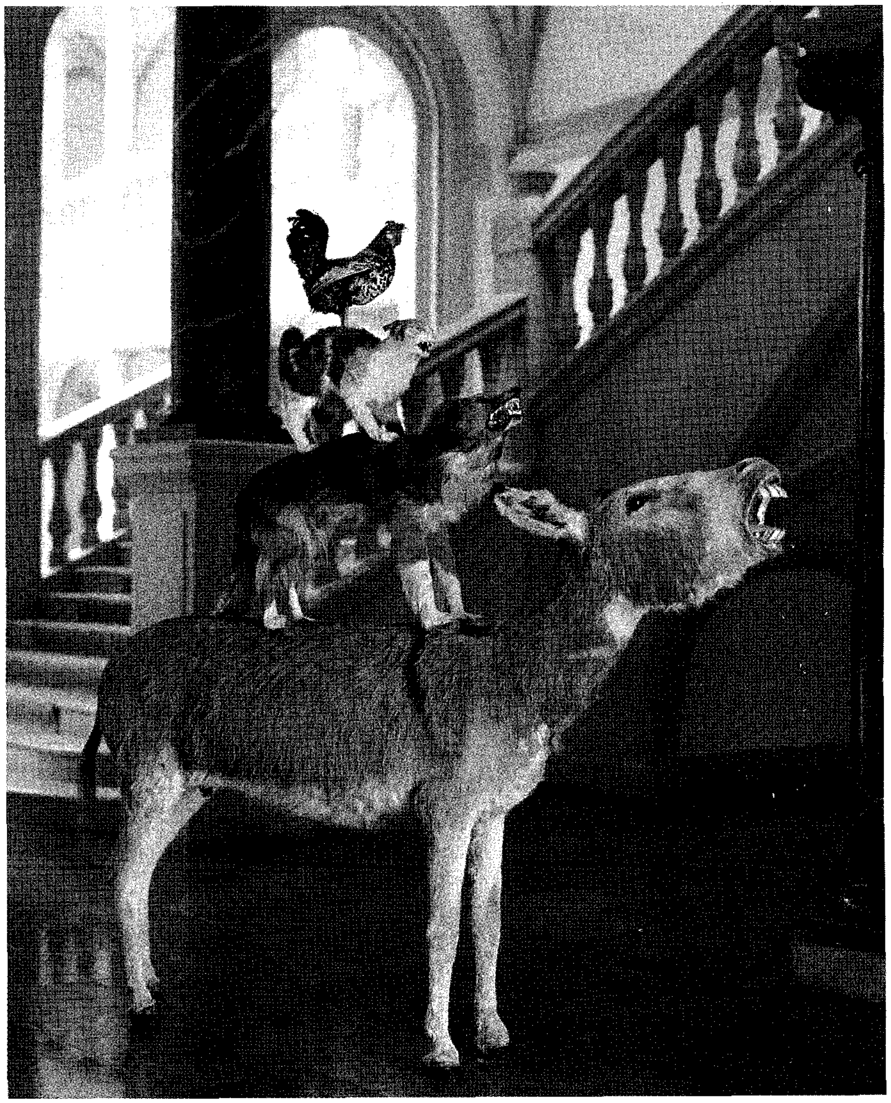
What has become increasingly evident, though, is the ambiguity in these things, and the presence of more than one layer of meaning: the animals, like the children that keep turning up in Cattelan's pieces, often refer to well-known fairy tales—"The Musicians of Bremen," for example—in which innocent courage is pitted against human cruelty. While Cattelan's distinctive, anarchic humor continues to set him apart from most artists working today, he has shown a growing tendency to engage with larger issues—social, political, and moral. Several critics have pointed to a preoccupation with death in his work, and also to some strange tensions involving religion and the Catholic Church. "Anyone growing up in Italy has a twisted relationship with religion," Cattelan once said. More often, though, he will insist that his work is about everyday problems and the struggle to get by in life. "Listen," he told me in the taxi coming back from Clichy, "I have the answer to the question you were asking, about how do I come up with such and such an idea. The answer is that I don't use my brain, I use my stomach. It's the same as when you recognize danger. No brain—you react in a physical way. Little by little, maybe, I learn to work with the backside of my stomach, to be more relaxed, to be more trusting of myself. But, anyway, failure is always waiting for you at the next corner. I think the moment you think you are successful, failure will be there for you."

To hear Cattelan talk, he had been a failure at everything. "I couldn't keep a job for more than two months," he has said. "I couldn't study: school was torture. And as long as I had to respect rules I was a disaster. Initially, art was just a way to try a new set of rules. But I was very afraid of failure in art as well."

In Padua, his father was a truck driver and his mother did housework for other people. Maurizio spent the first year of his life living with family friends and relatives, because his mother had lymphatic cancer; she went on to have two more children after that, both girls, and she lived for twenty more years, a fervent devotee of the Catholic Church who became "a center of spiritual activity," he says, "helping people in the community." Cattelan got his first job when he was twelve, selling religious images in the local church. Bored, he drew mustaches on some statuettes of St. Anthony. "The priest asked who had done it," he recalls. "Nobody answered, so he pointed at me, and said, 'I know it was you.' " Cattelan left home when he was eighteen, to live by himself in Padua, and for the next few years he worked at a succession of low-paying jobs—janitor, mailman, assistant at the local morgue. He hated all of them but was terrified of slipping back into the near-poverty he had known as a child. Padua, a university town, was a center of left-wing activity in those days; Cattelan steered clear of it as assiduously as he steered clear of the Church. One day in 1985, he quit his job at the morgue and moved in with a girlfriend who lived in the town of Forlì, near Bologna. He remembers this as a before-and-after moment. He had decided that he would never again work for somebody else.

His new companion was five years older than he was, and interested in becoming a journalist, or an artist of some sort. Cattelan himself had recently discovered art. When he was still in Padua, he had stopped to look in the window of a small gallery at some works by the contemporary Italian artist Michelangelo Pistoletto, whose paintings on mirrors obliged spectators literally to enter the composition. Puzzled, Cattelan went inside. The gallery owner answered his fumbling questions, and gave him a book by the art historian Carlo Giulio Argan. Cattelan tried to read the book, but what really interested him were the pictures in it—reproductions of modern and contemporary art, which he had never seen before. For someone who had a problem with rules, the practice of art in the nineteen-eighties must have looked like nirvana. Art could be anything at all, it seemed. The leading Italian art trend of the moment, Arte Povera, made use of common, throwaway ("poor") materials to bring art-making down to earth and demonstrate contempt for the commercial promotion of so-called "high art." Body art, language art, appropriation art, neo-expressionism, neo-Pop, Neo-Geo, and a dozen other approaches littered the post-minimalist landscape, where art schools disgorged increasing numbers of ambitious graduates. Anyone with a video camera could be a performance artist, carrying out activities which required neither practice nor skill, and anyone with a degree in art history could make conceptual art. Stoned on Joseph Beuys's shamanism and Andy Warhol's showmanship, on Damien Hirst's pickled sharks and Jeff Koons's high-end pornography, young artists everywhere were searching for the right shtick, the idea or image or material that nobody had happened on before.

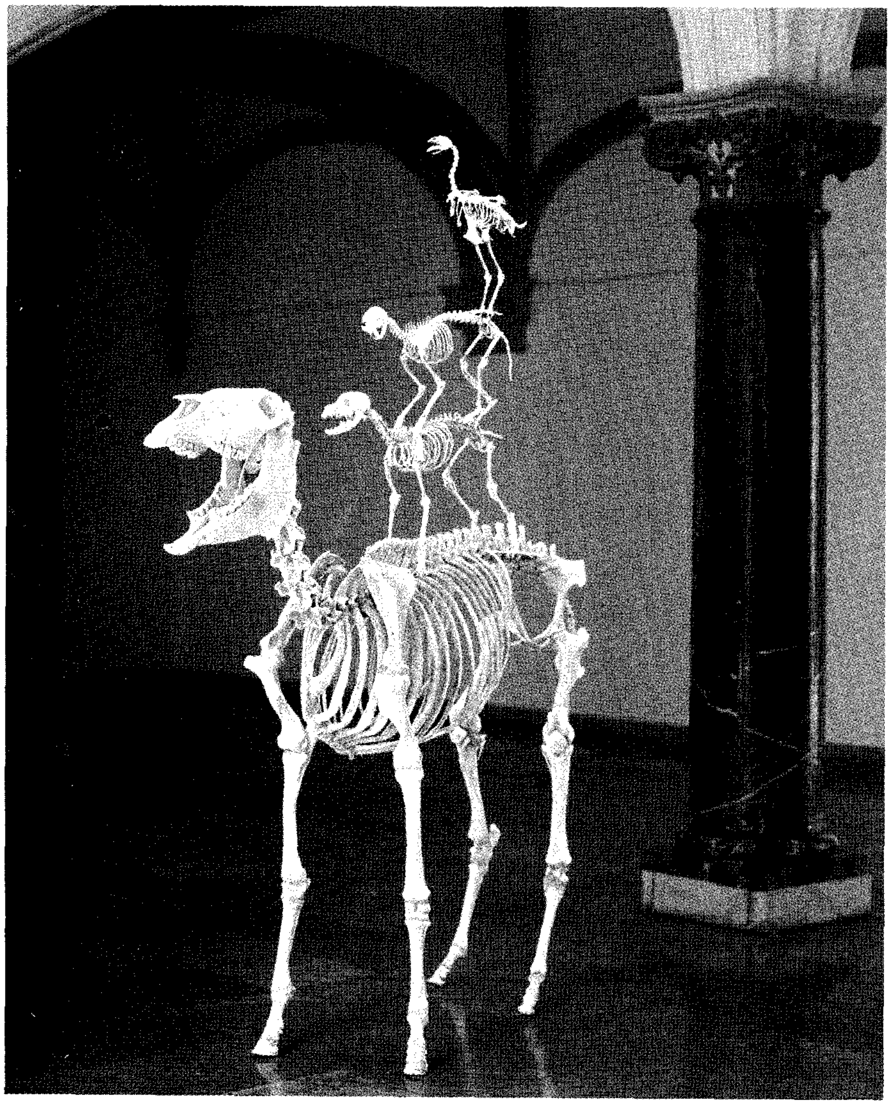
Some of the new work was brilliant and intellectually rigorous, but the sheer proliferation of self-indulgence could make you weep. Art galleries and museums and *Kunsthallen* around the world made "transgressive," rule-free art an increasing part of their program, commissioning young artists to do temporary works for special exhibitions or permanent installations in public settings, and out of this changing art market a new kind of practitioner emerged: the biennial artist, whose work appeared mainly in the large international group shows held every two or three or four years in cities around the world, from Venice and Basel to Johannesburg and Tokyo. Cattelan and the art critic Jens Hoffmann



Cattelan's "Love Saves Life" (1995) and, opposite page, "Love Lasts Forever" (1997).

COURTESY MARIAN GOODMAN GALLERY

made sport of this development in 1999, when they invited ten of their friends—most of them biennial regulars—to participate in the Sixth Caribbean Biennial on the island of St. Kitts; participation involved spending ten days on the island and doing whatever they felt like. Cattelan and Hoffman had raised the necessary travel funds from private sponsors, and persuaded the owner of the Golden Lemon Inn to provide free room and board. Rirkrit Tiravanija, one of the participants, told me recently that the artists all had a good time, but that "we were also quite aware that there was more to it than that." They had the somewhat uneasy sense of being in a work by Maurizio Cattelan.



Animals in Cattelan's pieces often refer to fairy tales like "The Musicians of Bremen."

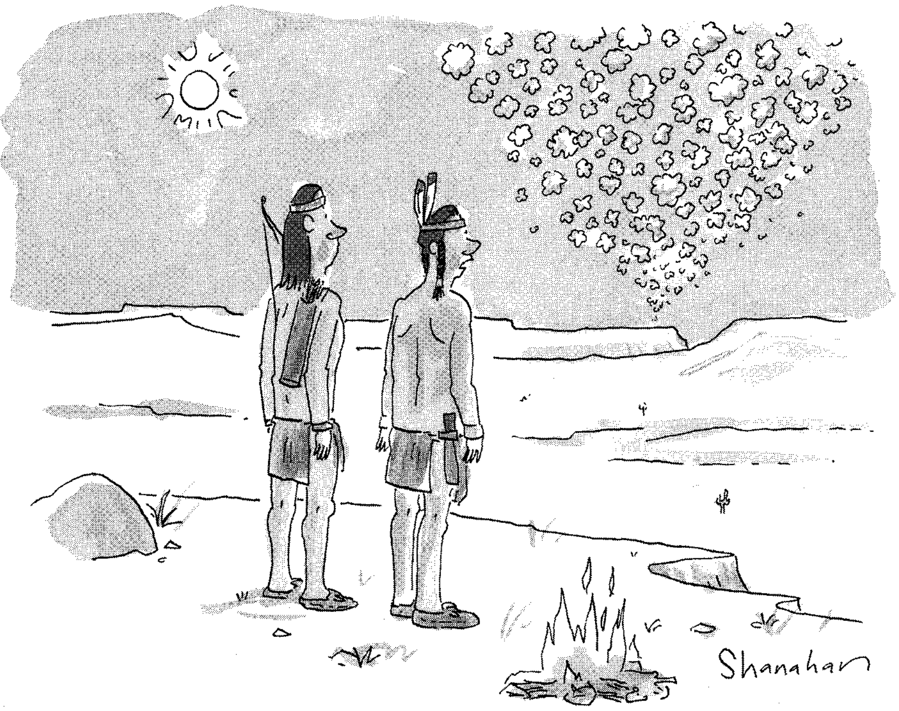
Unlike other artists of his generation, Cattelan never spent a day in college or art school. After his move to Forlì, suddenly unemployed and with no idea how to support himself, he began making some things for his girlfriend's apartment: chairs of found metal and chicken wire, iron lamps welded in designs that seemed to lie somewhere between function and art. A lot of innovative design work was going on in Italy then, and Cattelan soon found that he could sell his work to dealers, in Milan and elsewhere. He developed a relationship with a furniture store in Milan—its manager was Lucio Zotti—and began spending half his time there. (Zotti let him sleep on the beds in the showroom.) A gallery in Bologna showed his work. He met other artists, and the functional element in his designs became less evident. What he considers his first legitimate art piece is a black-and-white photograph of himself in an old-fashioned silver frame, called "Family Syntax" and dated 1989. He is bare-chested, facing the camera, both hands forming the image of a heart over his heart. A year later, he moved to Milan, sans girlfriend, and began, very tentatively, to think of himself as an artist.

Few artists have been so full of self-doubt, or used it so fearlessly. In Cattelan's case, the release mechanism was humor. Unable to come up with an idea for a 1992 group show in Milan, he went to the police station, filled out a report on a stolen art work, and exhibited the framed report. A few months later, he was invited to be in another group show at the contemporary art center Castello di Rivara, near Turin. On the night before the opening, he knotted white sheets together and hung them from the window of the empty, third-floor room that had been allotted to him. ("I let myself down from the window and ran away.") His first one-man show as an artist was in 1993, at the Massimo De Carlo gallery, in Milan. Perplexed viewers, finding the gallery door bricked over, discovered that by peering through an opening in the window they could just see, in the darkened and otherwise empty gallery, a motorized toy bear riding back and forth on a wire. His oddball reputation gained momentum. He was invited to show at the 1993 Venice Biennale, the oldest and most famous of the big international exhibitions. Stumped once again (or pretending to be), he sold his space to an advertising agency, which used it to display a huge ad for Schiapparelli perfume. Some critics considered this an act of cynicism, conflating art and commerce; for Cattelan, it expressed sheer panic—he called it "Working Is a Bad Job."

He came to New York for the first time in 1993. "I didn't have a penny," he recalls. "I was surrounded by garbage, but it was like a dream. 'I'm in New York! I'm in New York!' I had a feeling for this city—I don't know why." Offered a show at the Daniel Newburg Gallery, in SoHo, he brought in a live donkey and tethered it beneath a crystal chandelier, where it remained, braying and excreting, until officials from the Department of Health closed down the show. He returned to Italy, but within a few months he was back in the Big Apple, living in a two-room apartment in the East Village. His move was made possible by the Oblomov Foundation, which Cattelan had conceived in 1992. The Oblomov Foundation, named for the slothful character in Goncharov's novel, offered a ten-thousand-dollar grant to an artist who would agree not to make any art for one year. Cattelan raised the money (he can be astonishingly persuasive with donors) and tried to interest a number of young artists in applying, but there were no takers, so he used the ten thousand to establish himself in New York. He didn't have another show here for six years; he was showing all over Europe, though, and making life unusually difficult for his dealers there. In 1995, for his first solo show at the Emmanuel Perrotin gallery, in Paris, Cattelan induced the youthful Perrotin to wear, every day for six weeks, a costume that transformed him into a gigantic pink penis, with rabbit ears on the top. Perrotin says the show got a huge reaction and changed his life, although he denies that he was ever (as the costume implied) a notorious womanizer. A few years later, Cattelan pinioned his Milan dealer, Massimo De Carlo, to the gallery wall with several layers of heavy-duty duct tape, a tableau vivant that had to be deconstructed short of its planned three-hour time frame when De Carlo found that he could no longer breathe.

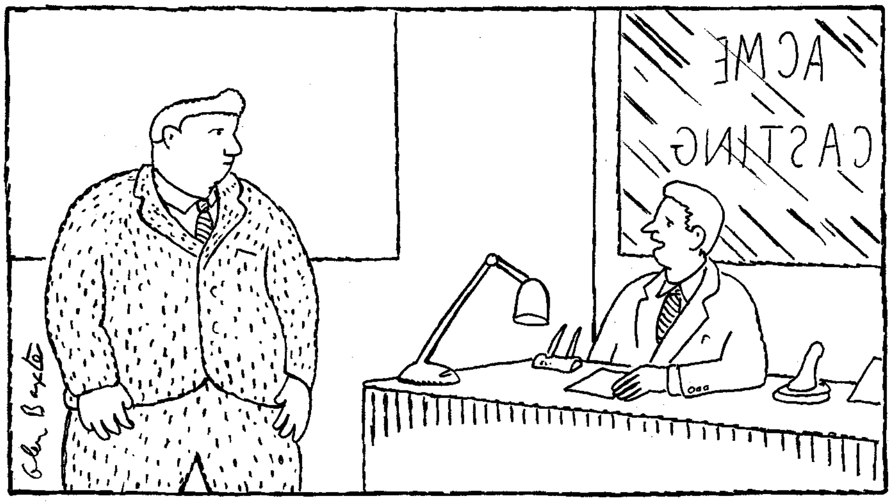
Cattelan also dallied with theft as an art form. When the De Appel Foundation, in Amsterdam, invited him to be in a group show there, in 1996, Cattelan and five student-curators removed an entire exhibition from a local art gallery and re-installed it at the Foundation. "It was not an appropriation," he explained to me. "It was more like reframing something, a displacement—temporary, of course." Failing to see the humor in displacement, the gallery owner notified the police, and it took much diplomatic negotiating by the De Appel Foundation's director (who had not been informed of the plan beforehand) to keep Cattelan out of jail. A year later, for his second solo show at Perrotin's in Paris, he had exact duplicates made of every work in a concurrent show by the Belgian artist Carsten Höller, at the gallery next door. "Prices were the same, everything was the same, even the press release," he said. "The idea was to create confusion . . . to question identity."

Another sort of confusion is still being spread by *Permanent Food,* the magazine founded in 1996 by Cattelan and Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, a young French artist he was dating at the time. *Permanent Food* is composed entirely of pages reprinted from other magazines. Cattelan and Gonzalez-Foerster invited their artist friends to contribute pages to it, and the magazine has been appearing mysteriously and irregularly ever since, in art bookstores and a few other locations. Produced these days by Cattelan and his friend Paola Manfrin, in Milan, it is a random assembly of unrelated images—ads, news photos, fashion shots, porno, urban scenes—with occasional flurries of text in various languages. (A note buried in issue No. 8 reads, "*Permanent Food* is a second generation magazine with a free copyright.") When I questioned Cattelan about stealing images, he seemed quite hurt. "Oh, that's interesting," he said. "Do you think Warhol was a thief, or Rauschenberg? No, I don't steal. It's just that you add something to the grammar. The fact that you put together two images makes the meaning of those images completely different. But listen, *Permanent* is just the desire of a kid to have his own magazine. That's the real reason." Last March, Cattelan received an honorary degree—in sociology, no less—from the University of Trento, in Italy. Getting it meant a lot to him. ("My mother always told me that without a degree you cannot go anywhere," he said.) In his acceptance speech, written jointly with Massimiliano Gioni but delivered by a member of the university's faculty—Cattelan had managed to get himself semi-immobilized in a plaster cast, after what he claimed was a skiing accident the day before—he said something quite revealing about the ambiguity of images: "I do not know exactly why, but it seems to me that images do not belong to anybody but are instead there, at the disposal of all."



"It's from my attorney."

Cattelan's work appeals to many people who miss the self-mocking anxiety behind the jokes. Everybody loved the oversized, papier-mâché caricature of Picasso's head that he had made for a "projects" show at the Museum of Modern Art in 1998. The head was worn by a professional actor (sometimes an actress) who circulated inside and outside the museum, signing autographs and posing for snapshots like a Disney World character. It was a little unclear what was being Disneyfied, Picasso or the museum, and the implied raillery seems to have caused some uneasiness at MOMA; but Cattelan, whose favorite artists are Picasso and Warhol, was also making fun of artists like himself, who blur the line between art, advertising, and popular entertainment. Autobiographical references abound in his work. "Charlie Don't Surf" (1997) consists of a school desk, a chair, and a child mannequin who sits at the desk, his hands nailed down to it by two pencils. In "Bidibidobidiboo," a work described by the curator and critic Francesco Bonami as being "about tenderness and despair," a squirrel that has just committed suicide sits slumped at a tiny kitchen table, near a sink full of dirty dishes, with a squirrel-size revolver lying at its feet. "The squirrel's kitchen is my parents' kitchen," Cattelan said to me. "I grew up in this kitchen." Cattelan's distinctive nose and droll expression turn up again and again in his work, from "Super noi," a 1992 piece made up of fifty portraits of Cattelan by a police sketch artist, based on verbal descriptions by other people, to more recent works such as "Mini-me" (he borrowed the title from the "Austin Powers" movie), a miniature Cattelan looking down from a bookshelf, and "Charlie," a three-year-old Cattelan on a remote-controlled tricycle that zipped around the grounds of the 2003 Venice Biennale, causing startled viewers to jump out of its path. Cattelan has no signature style or manner, and much of his work is not self-referential at all. His off-site contribution to the 2001 Venice Biennale was a full-scale re-creation of the famous "Hollywood" sign, transplanted to a desolate hillside in Palermo. He financed it himself—the costs included arranging charter flights to take people from Venice to Sicily and back—and six months later he paid to have it disassembled. "Later, we wanted to send it to the desert," he told me. "We tried to do something in Saudi Arabia, to make it like a mirage, but then came September 11th, and we abandoned it."



"QUITE FRANKLY, MR. BROWN, WE WERE LOOKING FOR SOMEONE WITH A TOUCH MORE WILLOWY HAUTEUR."

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Cattelan's life in New York these days is fairly austere. He lives alone, in the same apartment he rented ten years ago. The furnishings, according to one of the few friends allowed into it, include a cot, a table, a stereo, and not much else. Vanessa Beecroft, an Italian-born artist with whom he has had a long and competitive relationship, says that he buys a new set of clothes every year, and throws out the old ones. Having virtually no possessions, he loves giving odd presents to his friends, whose moods and eccentricities he observes with keen attention. (His gifts to my wife include a large three-dimensional display ad for Oscar Mayer franks, and a slightly shopworn toy alligator wearing a Batman cape and mask.) Cattelan can be simultaneously considerate and outrageous; his pantomimes and saturnine kidding (in a deep, rasping baritone) remind people of the actor Roberto Benigni. Removing his jacket in a Manhattan restaurant one evening recently, he gazed mournfully at Vesna, the maître d', and moaned, "Vesna, Vesna, you make me hot. If only you were two years younger." Vesna melted, as usual.

He keeps fit by swimming laps for seventy minutes every morning, at a public pool downtown, and by riding his bike, which he refers to as "my girlfriend." His studio is the telephone. He is constantly on the phone with one or another of his international band of friends and collaborators—Lucio Zotti, Massimiliano Gioni, Francesco Bonami, Ali Subotnick, and Paola Manfrin—who provide counsel, criticism, and other unpaid services. (They all have jobs and careers of their own.) At any time, they can expect to hear Cattelan's urgent voice on the line, saying, "I need an idea." The ideas almost always originate with Cattelan, but he needs to test them out on others, and to get their reactions. Gioni, who edited the magazine *Flash Art* before he became director of the Trussardi Foundation, has often acted as Cattelan's spokesman, giving interviews to people who think they are talking to the artist, and even delivering an occasional lecture that Cattelan doesn't feel qualified to give himself. Cattelan refers to all this interaction as a "family business"; when discussing his work, he almost always uses the plural pronoun "we" instead of "I," and he often says that, without the others, "I am nothing."

Like many people who have decided to work for themselves, though, Cattelan works more or less all the time. He travels a great deal, attending to future projects in Europe and elsewhere, and he has several ongoing activities in New York. The Wrong Gallery, which consists of two minuscule spaces behind blocked-off doorways in Chelsea, puts on exhibitions by young artists. *Charley* is a new magazine, edited by Cattelan, Gioni, and Subotnick, which documents work by artists they like. And there is the Marian Goodman Gallery, on West Fifty-seventh Street, which represents Cattelan in this country. For his first show there, in 2000, he presented a plastic-and-resin baby elephant covered by a white sheet with holes cut out for its soulful eyes; the title was "Not Afraid of Love." His second, in 2002, featured mannequins of two uniformed New York policemen, turned upside down and propped against a wall. Good-

"Not tonight, hon—I'm trying to cut down."

• •

man is one of the most astute dealers in New York. She had passed on taking Cattelan two years earlier, when she first looked at slides of his work, but later realized that she had made a mistake. It is said that Cattelan wanted to be with her gallery, which represents Gerhard Richter, John Baldessari, Thomas Struth, and other heavy hitters, to counter the impression that he isn't a serious artist. Goodman, who has not allowed herself to be taped to the wall or made to wear an embarrassing costume, has presided skillfully over his spectacularly rising prices. His small "Mini-me" sculpture recently sold for $355,200. "La Nona Ora" (the Pope laid low) brought just under a million dollars in 2001, and "The Ballad of Trotsky," the first of the suspended horses, went for two million dollars at Sotheby's last spring.

On the morning of September 11th, 2001, Cattelan was in a taxi, on his way to La Guardia airport, when he saw black smoke pouring across the river from Manhattan. He watched the second plane hit the north tower. He checked in, but then all flights were cancelled. Taxis being unavailable, Cattelan walked back to Manhattan, pulling his suitcase on its built-in wheels. It took him most of the day. Crossing the Fifty-ninth Street Bridge, he recalls, "everybody was walking the other way. I've never seen people, strangers, talking on the street like that." Since then, he feels, "it's not the same America I knew when I came here. The image of the country is being transformed." I asked him recently whether this feeling had anything to do with his decision to do the Kennedy piece, and he nodded emphatically. "A lot, a lot, a lot," he said. "Just last week, I saw the Michael Moore film"—"Fahrenheit 9/11"—"and I thought, Perfect, more than ever we have to do it. Even though my piece has nothing to do with this moment, it's like the—what we call the *spettro*, the ghost of something missing."

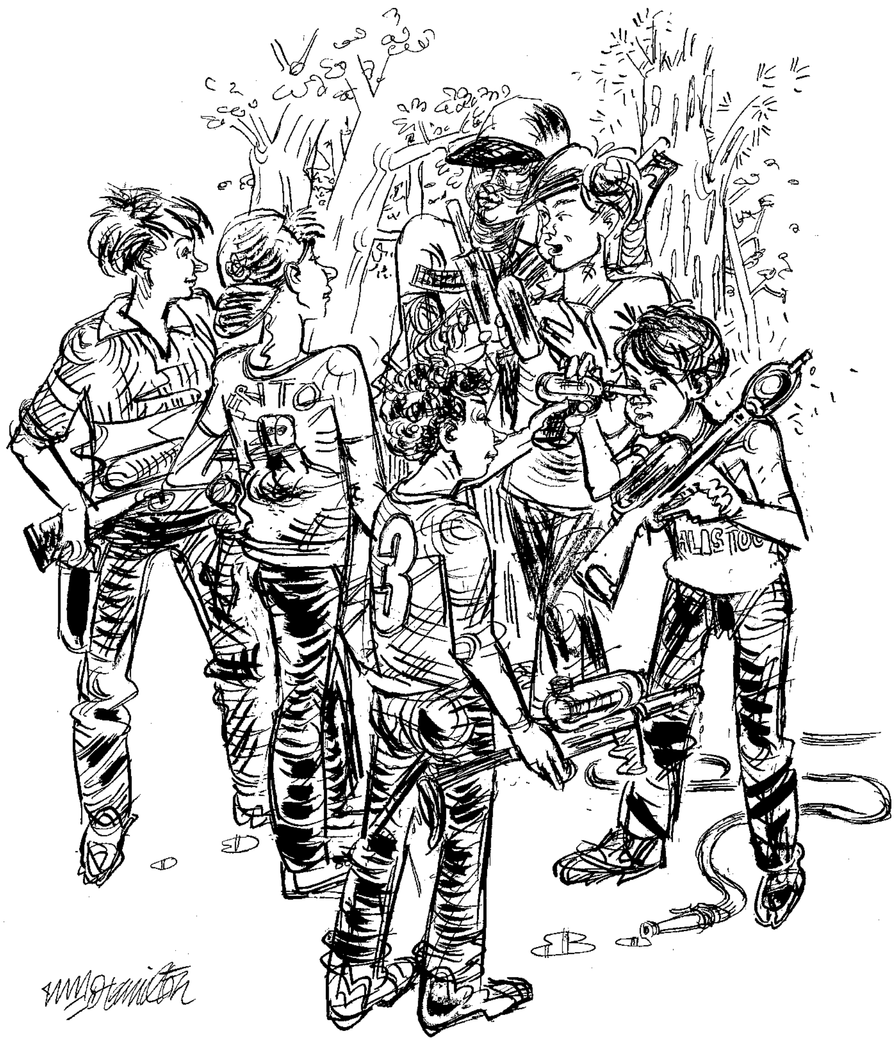
One of the people he had to persuade was Laura Hoptman. As a curator at MOMA, Hoptman had worked with Cattelan on the project show featuring the Picasso head. He had driven her crazy with his impossible demands and prankish behavior—she once found him sitting in the museum's Maserati sports car, one of the treasures of the design department, which, as she screamed at him, was absolutely off limits. They became close friends, however, and in the end she decided that he was a very important artist; when she moved to Pittsburgh two years ago to organize the 2004 Carnegie International Exhibition, which was inaugurated a year after the Venice Biennale, the first person she invited to be in it was Cattelan. Hoptman wanted her show to focus on "work that wrestles with the big issues, make-or-break work," and she had set her sights on Cattelan's "Him," the sculpture of Hitler praying. In addition to being the embodiment of evil, "Him" was also, according to Hoptman, about "the problem with Catholic doctrine, which says that everyone is absolved if they ask for it, and here is Hitler on his knees, asking for absolution. The question is, If there's a God, will this God forgive Hitler? Very few recent works of art deal with issues like that." Cattelan agreed to let her show it, but then, last January, he called her and said he had a new project, which he wanted her to show instead. He described the Kennedy piece, and Hoptman argued strenuously against it, expressing doubt that Kennedy would work as a subject. Cattelan kept pressing her. "He said, 'I'm showing it in Paris, Laura, and it's very important to me that it comes to America right after Paris,'" she told me. In the end, he convinced her. "The straw that broke the camel's back," Hoptman said, "was when he told me what it would be called: 'Now.'"

This fall will be an unusually busy one for Cattelan. In addition to his openings in Paris and Pittsburgh, he is showing a different version of the hanging child (one child this time) in October, at the Seville International Biennial, in Spain, and a week or so later the Louvre, which has recently become interested in working with contemporary artists, will mount, on an outside balcony surrounding its main courtyard, his 2003 motorized sculpture of a boy beating on a drum. (The piece has been described as a political wake-up call, a reminder of imminent catastrophe, with a clear reference to Günter Grass's novel "The Tin Drum.") He wanted to show the single hanging child in the Whitney Museum's Biennial exhibition last spring, but the image of a child suspended from a flagpole on Madison Avenue, just outside the entrance, was a bit too much for the Whitney. Because Cattelan has such a high regard for Chrissie Iles, the Whitney curator with whom he was working, he came up with an alternative. He arranged for a 2001 piece of his, a sculpture of a man—Cattellan—whose face is resting in a plate of spaghetti, to be shipped back from Japan and interred under the floorboards on the museum's second floor. A wall label made cryptic reference to the work, which no one could see. "To me," Iles has said, "burying a very expensive sculpture permanently within the walls of a museum is a much more radical statement than hanging a child sculpture from a flagpole. He made himself invisible in a show that means a lot to an artist's career." Cattelan told me that the sculpture from Japan was one he considered a failure, and that, in retrospect, he thinks his decision was the wrong one. "When they told me no"—on the hanging child, he said, "I should have just said O.K., another time, thank you."

On our last night in Paris with Cattelan, I brought up the problem of fame. We were sitting by the river on the Quai de Conti; the Bateaux-Mouches were going by, and a group of young people, theatre students, probably, were rehearsing a scene just out of earshot. It had struck me that Cattelan was very adept at avoiding the pitfalls of success. He has given relatively few interviews; there have been no mid-career retrospectives, and only one book-length monograph (in 2000) on his work. Having spent so many years being concerned about failure, I asked him, did he now worry about success and fame? "Are you crazy?" he said. "Being famous inside the art world—that's a real achievement? It's like one thousand people! Nobody stops you on the street. You can sometimes open up the debate with a new kind of work, but, in the end, who cares?" He did concede that in the last three years he had turned down a number of invitations for retrospective exhibitions, but that recently he had been thinking about how one could be done. "It might be interesting to do it using different venues," he said. "In Manhattan, for example, a specific venue for the Pope, where he can be displayed properly, and then in Queens something else, so between one work and another you can have a sort of dialogue. It would be like a dinner that doesn't give you indigestion. And maybe not all in museums, either."

I asked if he thought his work had a social function. He turned the question around, asking whether I thought it did and, if so, what was it? After some badinage over the question, he said, "Maybe I'm not prepared for this. O.K., I have a tendency to talk with an audience, but not so much in a thinking way. It's strange. I was born stupid and I'm still stupid. Meanwhile, I learn a little something, and this something comes from daily experience. For sure, I was really seduced by the possibility of aiming at a different type of audience, trying to get out from the usual art world. Milan was an example of that. But, you know, I don't feel like I'm the owner of the work. The work is the boss, or probably it's more suitable to call it a mistress. It gives me pleasure, and also a lot of worries. Whatever comes out of me is not me; it's something inside of me, but I'm not the master of it. Maybe I'm schizophrenic or something." He was quiet for a few moments, sitting on the wall and looking at the river. "What I'm doing is something I love," he said then. "I really think that without art I would have had a miserable life. But I don't think about tomorrow in terms of what I'm leaving."

Just the other day, Cattelan called from Europe. He'd been to Japan, to see about a new project, and he'd been to Berlin, and he'd just spent several days hiking in the Alps, something new for him. He had also been back to Druet's studio in Paris to check on the Kennedy figure. "Lucio kept saying the shoes were not right, so I finally said, O.K., no shoes, and no socks," he reported. "It reminds me more of someone who's a saint. Also, we decided to do closed eyes. The guy is definitely dead, but there's no finality. It has to be ungraspable. I'm so happy about the bare feet." ♦

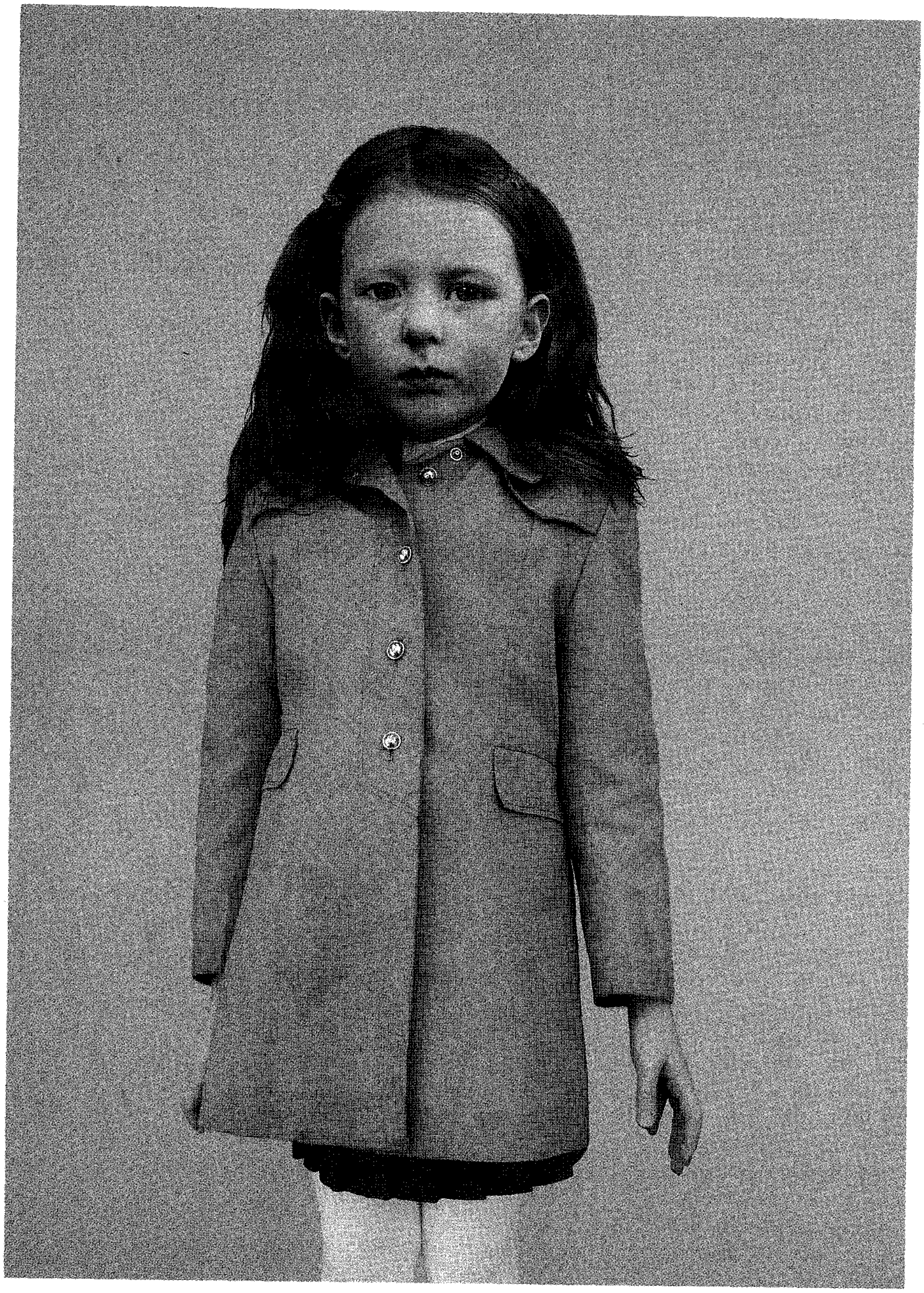


"Tommy and Ben are like Green Berets, Dan and Jerry are Navy SEALS, *and me and Scott are like private contractors."*

FICTION

THE DRESSMAKER'S CHILD

BY WILLIAM TREVOR



Cahal sprayed WD-40 on to the only bolt his spanner wouldn't shift. All the others had come out easily enough but this one was rusted in, the exhaust unit trailing from it. He had tried to hammer it out, he had tried wrenching the exhaust unit this way and that in the hope that something would give, but nothing had. Half five, he'd told Heslin, and the bloody car wouldn't be ready.

The lights of the garage were always on, because shelves had been put up in front of the windows that stretched across the length of the wall at the back. Abandoned cars, kept for their parts, and cars and motorcycles waiting for spares, and jacks that could be wheeled about took up what space there was on either side of the small wooden office, which was at the back also. There were racks of tools, and workbenches with vises along the back wall, and rows of new and reconditioned tires, and drums of grease and oil. In the middle of the garage there were two pits, in one of which Cahal's father was at the moment, putting in a clutch. There was a radio, on which advice was being given about looking after fish in an aquarium. "Will you turn that stuff off?" Cahal's father shouted from under the car he was working on, and Cahal searched the wave bands until he found music of his father's time.

He was an only son in a family of girls, all of them older, all of them gone from the town—three to England, another in Dunnes in Galway, another married in Nebraska. The garage was what Cahal knew, having kept his father company there since childhood, given odd jobs to do as he grew up. His father had had help then, an old man who was related to the family, whose place Cahal eventually took.

He tried the bolt again but the WD-40 hadn't begun to work yet. He was a lean, almost scrawny youth, dark-haired, his long face usually unsmiling. His garage overalls, over a yellow T-shirt, were oil-stained, gone pale where their green dye had been washed out of them. He was nineteen years old.

"Hullo," a voice said. A man and a woman, strangers, stood in the wide-open doorway of the garage.

"Howya," Cahal said.

"It's the possibility, sir," the man inquired, "you drive us to the sacred Virgin?"

"Sorry?" And Cahal's father shouted up from the pit, wanting to know who was there. "Which Virgin's that?" Cahal asked.

The two looked at one another, not attempting to answer, and then it occurred to Cahal that they were foreign people, who had not understood. A year ago a German had driven his Volkswagen into the garage, with a noise in the engine, so he'd said. "I had hopes it'd be the big end," Cahal's father admitted afterward, but it was only the catch of the bonnet gone a bit loose. A couple from America had had a tire put on their hired car a few weeks after that, but there'd been nothing since.

"Of Pouldearg," the woman said. "Is it how to say it?"

"The statue you're after?"

They nodded uncertainly and then with more confidence, both of them at the same time.

"Aren't you driving, yourselves, though?" Cahal asked them.

"We have no car," the man said.

"We are travelled from Ávila." The woman's black hair was silky, drawn back and tied with a red-and-blue ribbon. Her eyes were brown, her teeth very white, her skin olive. She wore the untidy clothes of a traveller: denim trousers, a woollen jacket over a striped red blouse. The man's trousers were the same, his shirt a nondescript shade of grayish blue, a white kerchief at his neck. A few years older than himself, Cahal estimated they'd be.

"Ávila?" he said.

"Spain," the man said.

Again Cahal's father called out, and Cahal said two Spanish people had come into the garage.

"In the store," the man explained. "They say you drive us to the Virgin."

"Are they broken down?" Cahal's father shouted.

He could charge them fifty euros, Pouldearg there and back, Cahal considered. He'd miss Germany versus Holland on the television, maybe the best match of the Cup, but never mind that for fifty euros.

"The only thing," he said, "I have an exhaust to put in."

He pointed at the pipe and silencer hanging out of Heslin's old Vauxhall, and they understood. He gestured with his hands that they should stay where they were for a minute, and with his palms held flat made a pushing motion in the air, indicating that they should ignore the agitation that was coming from the pit. Both of them were amused. When Cahal tried the bolt again it began to turn.

He made the thumbs-up sign when exhaust and silencer clattered to the ground. "I could take you at around seven," he said, going close to where the Spaniards stood, keeping his voice low so that his father would not hear. He led them to the forecourt and made the arrangement while he filled the tank of a Murphy's Stout lorry.

When Cahal's father had driven a mile out on the Bantry Road, he turned at the entrance to the stud farm and drove back to the garage, satisfied that the clutch he'd put in for Father Shea was correctly adjusted. He left the car in the forecourt, ready for Father Shea to collect, and hung the keys up in the office. Heslin from the courthouse was writing a check for the exhaust Cahal had fitted. Cahal was getting out of his overalls, and when Heslin had gone he said the people who had come wanted him to drive them to Pouldearg. They were Spanish people, Cahal said again, in case his father hadn't heard when he'd supplied that information before.

"What they want with Pouldearg?"

"Nothing, only the statue."

"There's no one goes to the statue these times."

"It's where they're headed."

"Did you tell them, though, how the thing was?"

"I did, of course."

"Why they'd be going out there?"

"There's people takes photographs of it."

Thirteen years ago, the then bishop and two parish priests had put an end to the cult of the wayside statue at Pouldearg. None of those three men, and no priest or nun who had ever visited the crossroads at Pouldearg, had sensed anything special about the statue; none had witnessed the tears that were said to slip out of the downcast eyes when pardon for sins was beseeched by penitents. The statue became the subject of attention in pulpits and in religious publications, the claims made for it fulminated against as a foolishness. And then a curate of that time demonstrated that what had been noticed by two or three local people who regularly passed by the statue—a certain dampness beneath the eyes—was no more than raindrops trapped in two overdefined hollows. There the matter ended. Those who had

LORETTA LUX, "MARIANNE" (2004)/YOSSI MILO GALLERY

so certainly believed in what they had never actually seen, those who had not noticed the drenched leaves of overhanging boughs high above the statue, felt as foolish as their spiritual masters had predicted they one day would. Almost overnight the Weeping Virgin of Pouldearg became again the painted image it had always been. Our Lady of the Wayside, it had been called for a while.

"I never heard people were taking photographs of it." Cahal's father shook his head as if he doubted his son, which he often did and usually with reason.

"A fellow was writing a book a while back. Going around all Ireland, tracking down the weeping statues."

"It was no more than the rain at Pouldearg."

"He'd have put that in the book. That man would have put the whole thing down, how you'd find the statues all over the place and some of them would be O.K. and some of them wouldn't."

"And you set the Spaniards right about Pouldearg?"

"I did, of course."

"Drain the juice out of young Leahy's bike and we'll weld his leak for him."

The suspicions of Cahal's father were justified: the truth had no more than slightly played a part in what Cahal had told the Spanish couple about Pouldearg. With fifty euros at the back of his mind, he would have considered it a failure of his intelligence had he allowed himself to reveal that the miracle once claimed for the statue at Pouldearg was without foundation. They had heard the statue called Our Lady of Tears as well as Our Lady of the Wayside and the Sacred Virgin of Pouldearg by a man in a Dublin public house with whom they had drifted into conversation. They'd had to repeat this a couple of times before Cahal grasped what they were saying, but he thought he got it right in the end. It wouldn't be hard to stretch the journey by four or five miles, and if they were misled by the names they'd heard the statue given in Dublin it was no concern of his. At five past seven, when he'd had his tea and had had a look at the television, he drove into the yard of Macey's Hotel. He waited there as he'd said he would. They appeared almost at once.

They sat close together in the back. Before he started the engine again Cahal told them what the cost would be and they said that was all right. He drove through the town, gone quiet as it invariably did at this time. Some of the shops were still open and would remain so for a few more hours—the newsagents' and tobacconists', the sweetshops and small groceries, Quinlan's supermarket, all the public houses—but there was a lull on the streets.

"Are you on holiday?" Cahal asked.

He couldn't make much of their reply. Both of them spoke, correcting one another. After a lot of repetition they seemed to be telling him that they were getting married.

"Well, that's grand," he said.

He turned out onto the Loye Road. Spanish was spoken in the back of the car. The radio wasn't working or he'd have put it on for company. The car was a black Ford Cortina with a hundred and eighty thousand miles on the clock; his father had taken it in part exchange. They'd use it until the tax sticker expired and then put it aside for spares. Cahal thought of telling the passengers that in case they'd think he hadn't much to say for himself, but he knew it would be too difficult. The Christian Brothers had had him labelled as not having much to say for himself, and it had stuck in his memory, worrying him sometimes in case it caused people to believe he was slow. Whenever he could, Cahal tried to give the lie to that by making a comment.

"Are you here long?" he inquired, and the girl said they'd been two days in Dublin. He said he'd been in Dublin himself a few times. He said it was mountainy from now on, until they reached Pouldearg. The scenery was beautiful, the girl said.

He took the fork at the two dead trees, although going straight would have got them there, too, longer still but potholes all over the place. It was a good car for the hills, the man said, and Cahal said it was a Ford, pleased that he'd understood. You'd get used to it, he considered, with a bit more practicing you'd pick up the trick of understanding them.

"How'd you say it in Spanish?" he called back over his shoulder. "A statue?"

"*Estatua*," they both said, together. "*Estatua*," they said.

"*Estatua*," Cahal repeated, changing gears for the hill at Loye.

The girl clapped her hands, and he could see her smiling in the rearview mirror. God, a woman like that, he thought. Give me a woman like that, he said to himself, and he imagined he was in the car alone with her, that the man wasn't there, that he hadn't come to Ireland with her, that he didn't exist.

"Do you hear about St. Teresa of Ávila? Do you hear about her in Ireland?" Her lips opened and closed in the rearview mirror, her teeth flashing, the tip of her tongue there for a moment. What she'd asked him was as clear as anyone would say it.

"We do, of course," he said, confusing St. Teresa of Ávila with the St. Teresa who'd been famous for her humility and her attention to little things. "Grand," Cahal said of her also. "Grand altogether."

To his disappointment, Spanish was spoken again. He was going with Minnie Fennelly, but, no doubt about it, this woman had the better of her. The two faces appeared side by side in his mind's eye and there wasn't a competition. He drove past the cottages beyond the bridge, the road twisting and turning all over the place after that. It said earlier on the radio there'd be showers but there wasn't a trace of one, the October evening without a breeze, dusk beginning.

"Not more than a mile," he said, not turning his head, but the Spanish was still going on. If they were planning to take photographs they mightn't be lucky by the time they got there. With the trees, Pouldearg was a dark place at the best of times. He wondered if the Germans had scored yet. He'd have put money on the Germans if he'd had any to spare.

Before they reached their destination, Cahal drew the car onto the verge where it was wide and looked dry. He could tell from the steering that there was trouble and found it in the left front wheel, the tire leaking at the valve. Five or six pounds it would have lost, he estimated.

"It won't take me a minute," he reassured his passengers, rummaging behind where they sat, among old newspapers and tools and empty paint tins, for the pump. He thought for a moment it mightn't be there and wondered what he'd do if the spare tire was flat, which sometimes it was if a car was a trade-in. But the pump was there and he gave the partially

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deflated tire a couple of extra pounds to keep it going. He'd see how things were when they reached Pouldearg crossroads.

When they did, there wasn't enough light for a photograph, but the man and woman went up close to the Wayside Virgin, which was more lopsided than Cahal remembered from the last time he'd driven by it, hardly longer than a year ago. The tire had lost the extra pressure he'd pumped in, and while they were occupied he began to change the wheel, having discovered that the spare tire wasn't flat. All the time he could hear them talking in Spanish, although their voices weren't raised. When they returned to the car it was still jacked up and they had to wait for a while, standing on the road beside him, but they didn't appear to mind.

He'd still catch most of the second half, Cahal said to himself when eventually he turned the car around and began the journey back. You never knew how you were placed as regards how long you'd be, how long you'd have to wait for people while they poked about.

"Was she all right for you?" he asked them, turning on the headlights so that the potholes would show up.

They answered in Spanish, as if they had forgotten that it wouldn't be any good. She'd fallen over a bit more, he said, but they didn't understand. They brought up the man they'd met in the public house in Dublin. They kept repeating something, a gabble of English words that still appeared to be about getting married. In the end, it seemed to Cahal that this man had told them people received a marriage blessing when they came to Pouldearg as penitents.

"Did you buy him drinks?" he asked, but that wasn't understood, either.

They didn't meet another car, nor even a bicycle, until they were farther down. He'd been lucky over the tire: they could easily have said they wouldn't pay if he'd had them stranded all night in the hills. They weren't talking anymore; when he looked in the mirror they were kissing, no more than shadows in the gloom, arms around one another.

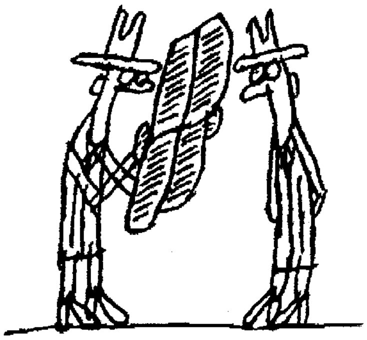
It was then, just after they'd passed the dead trees, that the child ran out. She came out of the blue cottage and ran at the car. He'd heard of it before, the child on this road who ran out at cars. It had never happened to himself, he'd never even seen a child there any time he'd passed, but often it was mentioned. He felt the thud no more than a second after the headlights picked out the white dress by the wall and then the sudden movement of the child running out.

Cahal didn't stop. In his mirror the road had gone dark. He saw something white lying there but said to himself he had imagined it. In the back of the Cortina the embrace continued.

Sweat had broken out on the palms of Cahal's hands, on his back and his forehead. She'd thrown herself at the side of the car and his own door was what she'd made contact with. Her mother was the unmarried woman of that cottage, many the time he'd heard that said in the garage. Fitzie Gill had shown him damage to his wing and said the child must have had a stone in her hand. But usually there wasn't any damage, and no one had ever mentioned damage to the child herself.

Bungalows announced the town, all of them lit up now. The Spanish began again, and he was asked if he could tell them what time the bus went to Galway. There was confusion because he thought they meant tonight, but then he understood it was the morning. He told them, and when they paid him in Macey's yard the man handed him a pencil and a notebook. He didn't know what that was for, but they showed him, making gestures, and he wrote down the time of the bus. They shook hands with him before they went into the hotel.

In the very early morning, just after half past one, Cahal woke up and couldn't sleep again. He tried to recall what he'd seen of the football, the moves there'd been, the saves, the yellow card shown twice. But nothing seemed quite right, as if the television pictures and snatches of the commentary had come from a dream, which he knew they hadn't. He had examined the side of the car in the garage and there'd been nothing. He had switched out the lights of the garage and locked up. He'd watched the football in Shannon's and hadn't seen the end because he lost interest when nothing much was happening. He should have stopped; he didn't know why he hadn't. He couldn't remember braking. He didn't know if he'd tried to, he didn't know if there hadn't been time.



The Ford Cortina had been seen setting out on the Loye Road and then returning. His father knew the way he'd gone, past the unmarried woman's cottage. The Spaniards would have said in the hotel they'd seen the Virgin. They'd have said in the hotel they were going on to Galway. They could be found in Galway for questioning.

In the dark Cahal tried to work it out. They would have heard the bump. They wouldn't have known what it was, but they'd have heard it while they were kissing. They would remember how much longer it was before they got out of the car in Macey's yard. It hadn't been a white dress, Cahal realized suddenly; it trailed on the ground, too long for a dress, more like a nightdress.

He'd seen the woman who lived there a few times when she came in to the shops, a dressmaker they said she was, small and wiry with dark inquisitive eyes and a twist in her features that made them less appealing than they might have been. When her child had been born to her, the father had not been known—not even to herself, so it was said, though possibly without justification. People said she didn't speak about the birth of her child.

As Cahal lay in the darkness, he resisted the compulsion to get up in order to go back and see for himself; to walk out to the blue cottage, since to drive would be foolish; to look on the road for whatever might be there, he didn't know what. Often he and Minnie Fennelly got up in the middle of the night in order to meet in the back shed at her house. They lay on a stack of netting there, whispering and petting one another, the way they couldn't anywhere in the daytime. The best they could manage in the daytime was half an hour in the Ford Cortina out in the country somewhere. They could spend half the night in the shed.

He calculated how long it would take him to walk out to where the incident had occurred. He wanted to; he wanted to get there and see nothing on the road and to close his eyes in relief. Sometimes dawn

"Moist towelette to cleanse your palate?"

had come by the time he parted from Minnie Fennelly, and he imagined that, too, the light beginning as he walked in from the country feeling all right again. But more likely he wouldn't be.

"One day that kid'll be killed," he heard Fitzie Gill saying, and someone else said the woman wasn't up to looking after the kid. The child was left alone in the house, people said, even for a night while the woman drank by herself in Leahy's, looking around for a man to keep her company.

That night, Cahal didn't get back to sleep. And all the next day he waited for someone to walk into the garage and say what had been found. But no one did, and no one did the next day, either, or the day after that. The Spaniards would have gone on from Galway by now, the memories of people who had maybe noticed the Ford Cortina would be getting shaky. And Cahal counted the drivers who he knew for a fact had experienced similar incidents with the child and said to himself that maybe, after all, he'd been fortunate. Even so, it would be a long time before he drove past that cottage again, if ever he did.

Then something happened that changed all that. Sitting with Minnie Fennelly in the Cyber Café one evening, Minnie Fennelly said, "Don't look, only someone's staring at you."

"Who is it?"

"D'you know that dressmaker woman?"

They'd ordered chips and they came just then. Cahal didn't say anything, but knew that sooner or later he wasn't going to be able to prevent himself from looking around. He wanted to ask if the woman had her child with her, but in the town he had only ever seen her on her own and he knew that the child wouldn't be there. If she was, it would be a chance in a thousand, he thought, the apprehension that had haunted him on the night of the incident flooding his consciousness, stifling everything else.

"God, that one gives me the creeps!" Minnie Fennelly muttered, splashing vinegar onto her chips.

Cahal looked round them. He caught a glimpse of the dressmaker, alone, before he quickly looked back. He could still feel her eyes on his back. She would have been in Leahy's; the way she was sitting suggested drunkenness. When they'd finished their chips and the coffee they'd been brought while they were waiting, he asked if she was still there.

"She is, all right. D'you know her? Does she come into the garage?"

"Ah no, she hasn't a car. She doesn't come in."

"I'd best be getting back, Cahal."

He didn't want to go yet, while the woman was there. But if they waited they could be here for hours. He didn't want to pass near her, but as soon as he'd paid and stood up he saw they'd have to. When they did she spoke to Minnie Fennelly, not him.

"Will I make your wedding dress for you?" the dressmaker offered. "Would you think of me at all when it'll be time you'd want it?"

And Minnie Fennelly laughed and said no way they were ready for wedding dresses yet.

"Cahal knows where he'll find me," the dressmaker said. "Amn't I right, Cahal?"

"I thought you didn't know her," Minnie Fennelly said when they were outside.

Three days after that, Mr. Durcan left his prewar Riley in because the hand brake was slipping. He'd come back for it at four, he arranged, and said before he left, "Did you hear that about the dressmaker's child?"

He wasn't the kind to get things wrong. Fussy, with a thin black mustache, his Riley Sports the pride of his bachelor life, he was as tidy in what he said as he was in how he dressed.

"Gone missing," he said now. "The Gardai are in on it."

It was Cahal's father who was being told this. Cahal, with the cooling system from Gibney's bread van in pieces on a workbench, had just found where the tube had perished.

"She's backward, the child," his father said.

"She is."

"You hear tales."

"She's gone off for herself, anyway. They have a block on a couple of roads, asking was she seen."

The unease that hadn't left him since the dressmaker had been in the Cyber Café began to nag again when Cahal heard that. He wondered what questions the Gardai were asking; he wondered when it was that the child had taken herself off; although he tried, he couldn't piece anything together.

"Isn't she a backward woman herself, though?" his father remarked when Mr. Durcan had gone. "Sure, did she ever lift a finger to tend that child?"

Cahal didn't say anything. He tried to think about marrying Minnie Fennelly, although still nothing was fixed, not even an agreement between themselves. Her plump, honest features became vivid for a moment in his consciousness, the same plumpness in her arms and her hands. He found it attractive, he always had, since first he'd noticed her when she was still going to the nuns. He shouldn't have had thoughts about the Spanish girl, he shouldn't have let himself. He should have told them the statue was nothing, that the man they'd met had been pulling a fast one for the sake of the drinks they'd buy him.

"Your mother had that one run up curtains for the back room," his father said. "Would you remember that, boy?"

Cahal shook his head.

"Ah, you wouldn't have been five at the time, maybe younger yet. She was just after setting up with the dressmaking, her father still there in the cottage with her. The priests said give her work on account she was a charity. Bedad, they wouldn't say it now!"

Cahal turned the radio on and turned the volume up. Madonna was singing, and he imagined her in the getup she'd fancied for herself a few years ago, suspenders and items of underclothes. He'd thought she was great.

"I'm taking the Toyota out," his father said, and the bell from the forecourt rang, someone waiting there for petrol. It didn't concern him, Cahal told himself as he went to answer it. What had occurred on the evening of Germany and Holland was a different thing altogether from the news Mr. Durcan had brought, no way could it be related.

"Howya," he greeted the school-bus driver at the pumps.

The dressmaker's child was found where she'd lain for several days, at the bottom of a fissure, half covered with shale, in the exhausted quarry half a mile from where she'd lived. Years ago the last of the stone had been carted away and a barbed-wire fence put up, with two warning notices about danger. She would have crawled in under the bottom strand of wire, the Gardai said, and a chain-link fence replaced the barbed wire within a day.

In the town the dressmaker was condemned, blamed behind her back for the tragedy that had occurred. That her own father, who had raised her on his own since her mother's early death, had himself been the father of the child was an ugly calumny, not voiced before, but seeming now to have a natural place in the paltry existence of a child who had lived and died wretchedly.

"How are you, Cahal?" Cahal heard the voice of the dressmaker behind him when, early one November morning, he made his way to the shed where he and Minnie Fennelly indulged their affection for one another. It was not yet one o'clock, the town lights long ago extinguished except for a few on Main Street. "Would you come home with me, Cahal? Would we walk out to where I am?"

All this was spoken to his back while Cahal walked on. He knew who was there. He knew who it was, he didn't have to look.

"Leave me alone," he said.

"Many's the night I rest myself on the river seat and many's the night I see you. You'd always be in a hurry, Cahal."

"I'm in a hurry now."

"One o'clock in the morning! Arrah, go on with you, Cahal!"

"I don't know you. I don't want to be talking to you."

"She was gone for five days before I went to the Guards. It wouldn't be the first time she was gone off. A minute wouldn't go by without she was out on the road."

Cahal didn't say anything. Even though he still didn't turn round he could smell the drink on her, stale and acrid.

"I didn't go to them any quicker for fear they'd track down the way it was when the lead would be fresh for them. D'you understand me, Cahal?"

Cahal stopped. He turned round and she almost walked into him. He told her to go away.

"The road was the thing with her. First thing of a morning she'd be running at the cars without a pick of food inside her. The next thing is she'd be off up the road to the statue. She'd kneel to the statue the whole day until she was found by some old fellow who'd bring her back to me. Some old fellow'd have her by the hand and they'd walk in the door. Oh, many's the time, Cahal. Wasn't it the first place the Guards looked when I said that to the sergeant? Any woman'd do her best for her own, Cahal."

"Will you leave me alone!"

"Gone seven it was, maybe twenty past. I had the door open to go in to Leahy's and I seen the black car going by and yourself inside it. You always notice a car in the evening time, only the next thing was I was late back from Leahy's and she was gone. D'you understand me, Cahal?"

"It's nothing to do with me."

"He'd have gone back the same way he went out, I said to myself, but I didn't mention it to the Guards, Cahal. Was she in the way of wandering in her nightdress? was what they asked me and I told them she'd be out the door before you'd see her. Will we go home, Cahal?"

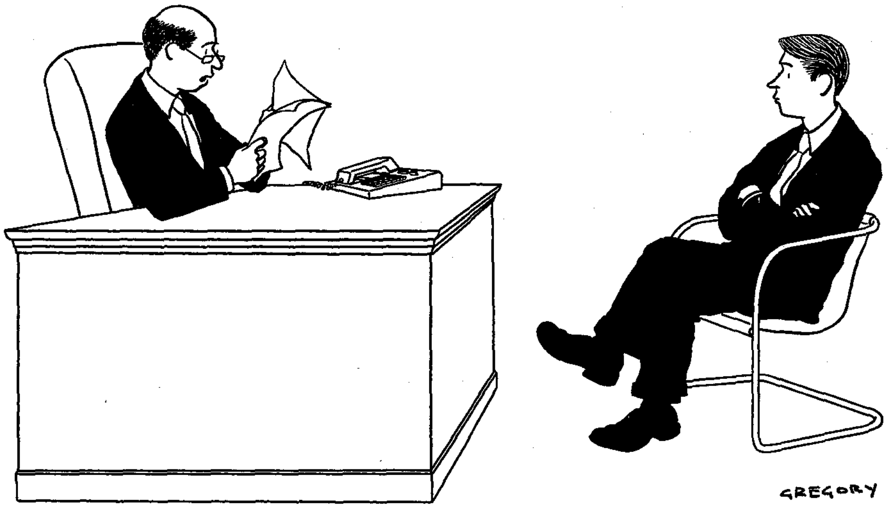
"I'm not going anywhere with you."

"There'd never be a word of blame on yourself, Cahal."

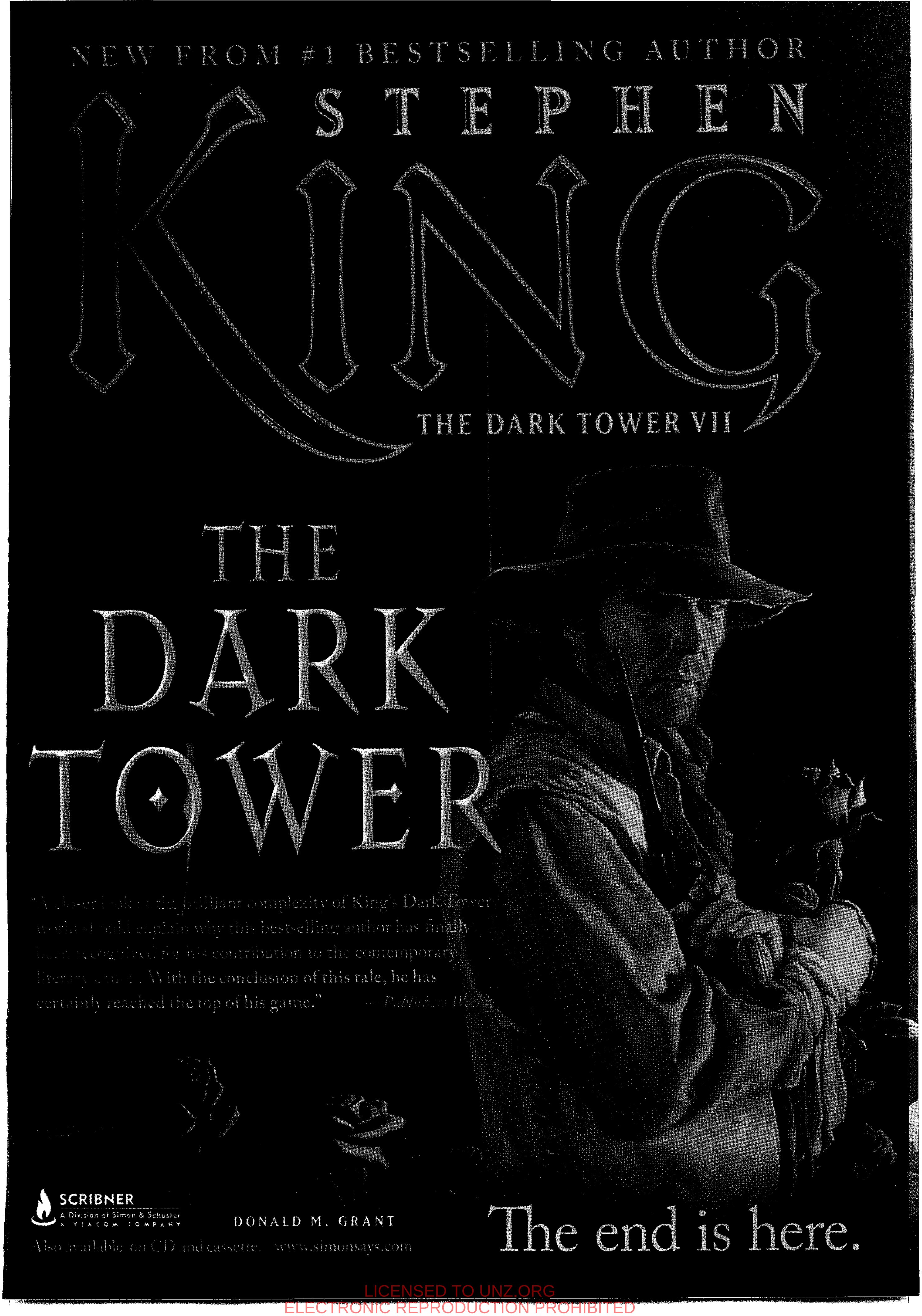
"There's nothing to blame me for. I had people in the car that evening."

"I swear before God, what's happened is done with. Come back with me now, Cahal."

"Nothing happened, nothing's done with. There was Spanish people in the car the entire time. I drove them out to



"I'm afraid your M.B.A. loses some of its lustre in light of the fact that you were home-schooled."



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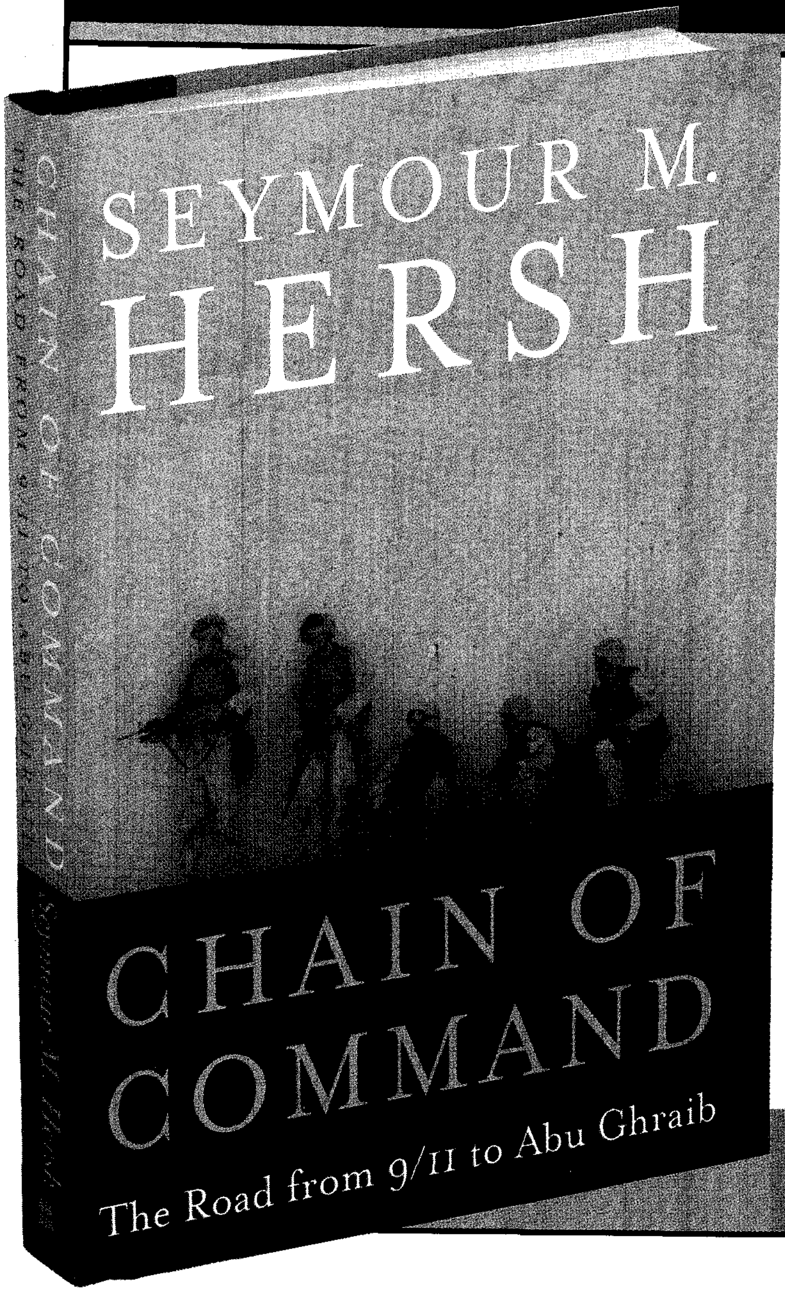

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Pouldearg and back again to Macey's Hotel."

"Minnie Fennelly's no use to you, Cahal."

He had never seen the dressmaker up close before. She was younger than he'd thought, but still looked what she was—a fair bit older than himself, maybe twelve or thirteen years. The twist in her face wasn't ugly, but it spoilt what might have been beauty of a kind, and he remembered the flawless beauty of the Spanish girl and the silkiness of her hair. The dressmaker's hair was black, too, but wild and matted, limply straggling, falling to her shoulders. The eyes that had stared so intensely at him in the Cyber Café were bleary. Her full lips were drawn back in a smile, one of her teeth slightly chipped. Cahal walked away and she did not follow him.

That was the beginning; there was no end. In the town, though never again at night, she was always there: Cahal knew that was an illusion, that she wasn't always there but seemed so because her presence on each occasion meant so much. She tidied herself up; she wore dark clothes, which people said were in mourning for her child; and people said she had ceased to frequent Leahy's public house. She was seen painting the front of her cottage, the same blue shade, and tending its bedraggled front garden. She walked from the shops of the town, and never now stood, hand raised, in search of a lift.

Continuing his familiar daily routine of repairs and servicing and answering the petrol bell, Cahal found himself unable to dismiss the connection between them that the dressmaker had made him aware of when she'd walked behind him in the night, and knew that the roots it came from spread and gathered strength and were nurtured, in himself, by fear. Cahal was afraid without knowing what he was afraid of, and when he tried to work this out he was bewildered. He began to go to Mass and to confession more often than he ever had before. It was noticed by his father that he had even less to say these days to the customers at the pumps or when they left their cars in. His mother wondered about his being anemic and put him on iron pills. Returning for a couple of days at a weekend, his sister who was still in Ireland said the trouble must surely be Fennelly.

During all this time—passing in other ways quite normally—the child was lifted again and again from the cleft in the rocks, still in her nightdress as Cahal had seen her, laid out and wrapped as the dead are wrapped. If he hadn't had to change the wheel he would have passed the cottage at a different time and the chances were she wouldn't have been ready to run out, wouldn't just then have felt inclined to. If he'd explained to the Spaniards about the Virgin's tears being no more than rain he wouldn't have been on the road at all.

The dressmaker did not speak to him again or seek to, but he knew that the fresh blue paint, and the mourning clothes that were not, with time, abandoned, and the flowers that came to fill the small front garden were all for him. When a little more than a year had passed since the evening he'd driven the Spanish couple out to Pouldearg, he attended Minnie Fennelly's wedding to Des Downey, a vet from Athenry.

The dressmaker had not said it, but it was what there had been between them in the darkened streets: that he had gone back, walking out as he had wanted to that night when he'd lain awake, that her child had been there where she had fallen on the road, that he had carried her to the quarry. And Cahal knew it was the dressmaker, not he, who had done that.

He visited the Virgin of the Wayside, always expecting that she might be there. He knelt, and asked for nothing. He spoke only in his thoughts, offering reparation and promising to accept whatever might be visited upon him for associating himself with the mockery of the man the Spaniards had met by chance in Dublin, for mocking the lopsided image on the road, taking fifty euros for a lie. He had looked at them kissing. He had thought about Madonna with her clothes off, not minding that she called herself that.

Once when he was at Pouldearg Cahal noticed the glisten of what had once been taken for tears on the Virgin's cheek. He touched the hollow where this moisture had accumulated and raised his dampened finger to his lips. It did not taste of salt, but that made no difference. Driving back, when he went by the dressmaker's blue cottage she was there in the front garden, weeding her flower beds. Even though she didn't look up, he wanted to go to her and knew that one day he would. ♦

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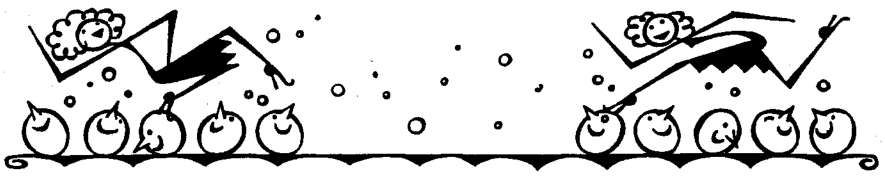


In Greene's life, all encounters—from the most casual to the most passionate—were potential sources for his fiction.

FLOC'H

BOOKS

GOD IN THE DETAILS

Graham Greene's religious realism.

BY RUTH FRANKLIN

Borges, in one of his enigmatic parables, imagined an empire in which the art of cartography had "attained such perfection" that a map was exactly the same size as the area it covered. At well over two thousand pages, Norman Sherry's authorized biography of Graham Greene, a writer whose slender novels are distinguished by a near-phobia of the extraneous, occasionally seems in danger of reaching a similar condition. The third volume of "The Life of Graham Greene" (Viking; $39.95) has at last arrived, fifteen years after the publication of Volume I, and thirty years after Greene designated Sherry his biographer.

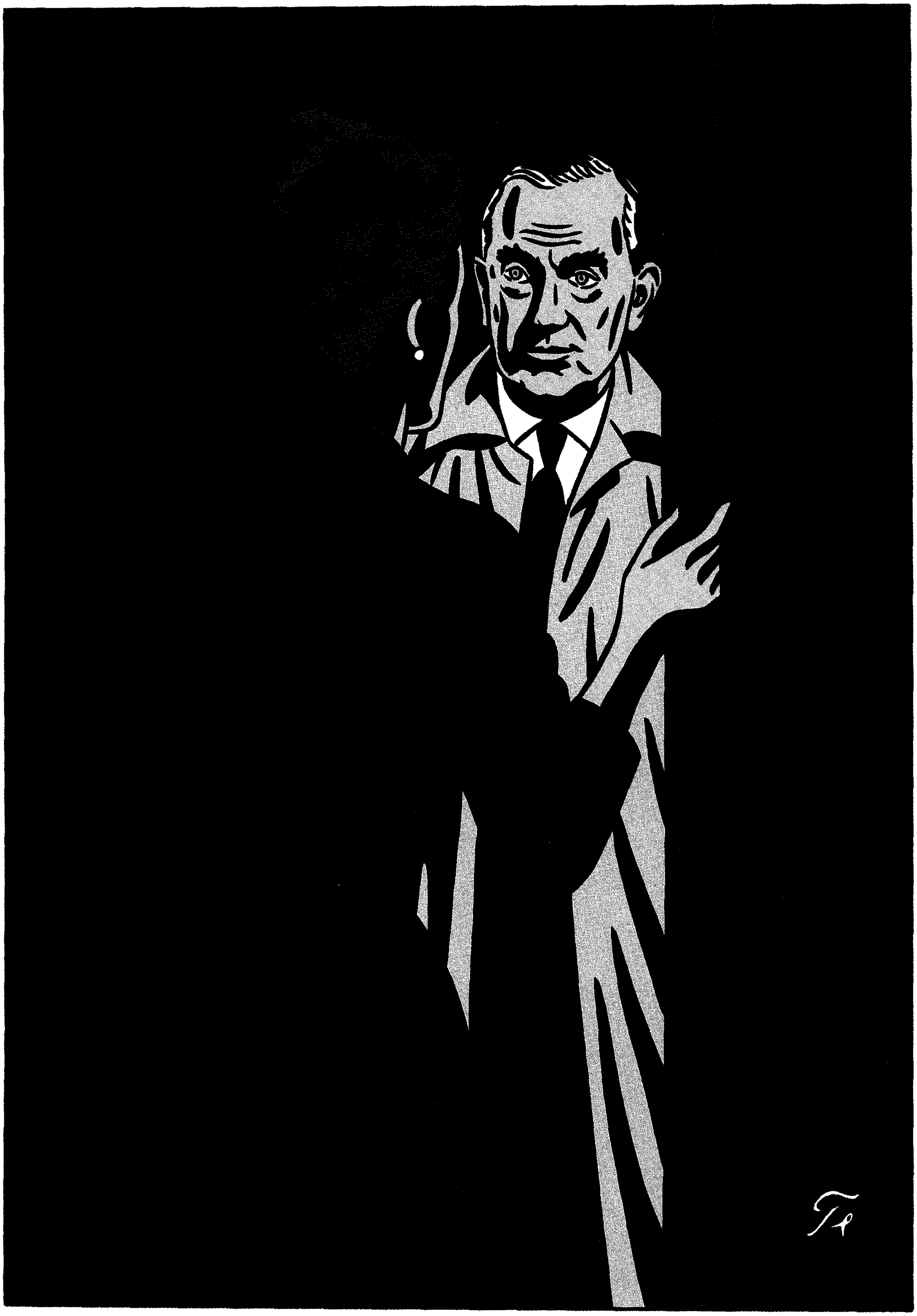
Sherry's sluggish pace owes something to the difficulty of summing up the career of this stunningly prodigious writer. During a writing life of more than sixty years, Greene published twenty-six novels, in an almost unseemly variety of genres, ranging from early thrillers and "entertainments" such as "Brighton Rock" and "This Gun for Hire," through the famous "Catholic trilogy" of his middle years, to a more experimental later phase that includes such uncategorizable works as "Travels with My Aunt" and "Monsignor Quixote." He also produced short stories, plays, film scripts, memoirs, and travel books, plus a vast quantity of correspondence, to much of which Sherry has had exclusive access. (Because of an ambiguous comma in a document Greene signed on his deathbed, other scholars were forbidden to quote from unpublished material until Sherry's project was complete.)

The mention of Graham Greene inevitably evokes "Greeneland," reviewers' shorthand for the fictional terrain where all of Greene's novels seem to be set—a desolate colonial outpost with unforgiving weather, which is inhabited by mid-level civil servants, simple-hearted locals, and adulterous wives. Greene was always annoyed by this trope, insisting that his books "carefully and accurately described" the world as he experienced it. As if to prove his point, he extracted from Sherry a promise to "follow in his footsteps" to wherever he had set a major work—Mexico, Liberia, Cuba, Vietnam, Haiti, the Congo, and numerous other inhospitable locations. In the course of fulfilling this promise, Sherry contracted gangrene, which required the removal of part of his intestines. His relief at bringing the project to completion is written all over this third volume; in eight pages of acknowledgments, he thanks his Buick dealer, his periodontist, his postman, and "Nellie the night janitoress, who nearly always caught me in the late hours working."

Operating under the assumption that every place Greene went and every person he met is significant, Sherry has inevitably become bogged down in the most minute details. But he did discover that Greene had based a number of his characters on real people, the most important of whom, Sherry argues, was himself. This presents a particular problem. Greene lived his life to extremes: he had serious affairs, sometimes simultaneously, with at least three women, amid a host of more casual liaisons; he spied for MI6, smoked opium, visited prostitutes. However, he displayed a remarkable equanimity in the midst of chaos, maintaining a matutinal regimen of five hundred words regardless of the circumstances. Combine this with a delight in secrecy—Greene was given to writing two versions of a diary entry to conceal a visit to a prostitute, to using the names of his characters as aliases on his business cards, and to sending two postcards to his mistress, a chaste version addressed to her and her husband at home, and a more intimate one for her to collect elsewhere—and he is a difficult subject indeed. He once wrote to Catherine Walston, one of his longtime lovers, "If anybody ever tries to write a biography of me, how complicated they are going to find it and how misled they are going to be."

The fourth of six children, Henry Graham Greene was born October 2, 1904, in Berkhamsted, England. The family lived at Berkhamsted School, where Greene's father worked his way up to headmaster, and later in life Greene recalled the "green baize door" that separated the safety of the family's living quarters from the alien world of the school. A shy boy, devoid of athletic talent, he suffered severe depressions as a teen-ager and became fascinated with suicide. His autobiography, "A Sort of Life," details experiments with Russian roulette, but Sherry also reports less convincing early attempts such as eating a tin of hair pomade and going swimming after taking more than a dozen aspirin. (In an unauthorized biography, Michael Shelden alleged that there was a more serious incident, in which Greene tried to hang himself in a potting shed.) At the age of sixteen, he was sent to a London psychoanalyst. Though he flourished in the cultured atmosphere of the analyst's home, the treatment did little to banish the allure that suicide held for him, which manifested itself repeatedly in his work.

While a student at Oxford, where he

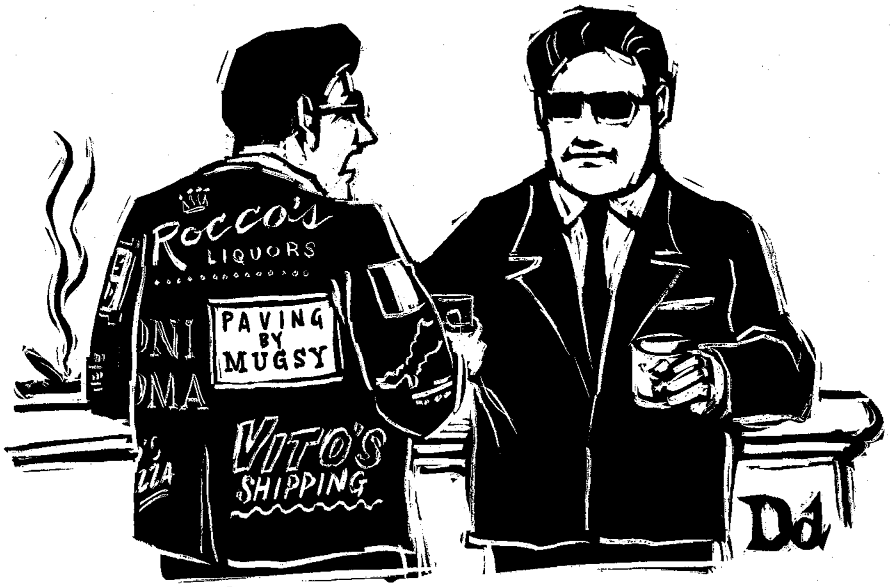


dabbled in literary activities and published a book of poetry, Greene fell in love with Vivien Dayrell-Browning, a teen-age convert to Catholicism who refused to be involved with him unless he converted as well. He pursued her avidly, writing her as many as three letters a day and even offering a celibate marriage to appease her fear of sex. (Sherry's first volume quotes an inordinate number of these youthful romantic blatherings, even reproducing the back of an envelope on which Greene had repeatedly scribbled "143," their code for "I love you.") After leaving Oxford, in 1925, he moved to Nottingham to work the night shift on a local paper, and began the process of conversion. He and Vivien were married two years later.

It is almost impossible to imagine what kind of writer Greene would have been had he not become a Catholic. His impassioned and tortured relationship with his faith is the backbone of his best work, particularly the three novels that form the centerpiece of his career: "The Power and the Glory," "The Heart of the Matter," and "The End of the Affair." Books that do not explicitly concern themselves with the theme of religion cannot altogether stay away from it. Yet his motivations for converting seem to have been less than pious; a friend remembers advising him, "If you need this for your fuck, go ahead and do it." And from the start he had trouble reconciling the mathematical logic of his mind with the superstition and mystery of the Church. He called himself a "Catholic agnostic" and, at his confirmation, took the name Thomas, after the doubting apostle. In his autobiography, he wrote, "If I were ever to be convinced in even the remote possibility of a supreme, omnipotent and omniscient power I realized that nothing afterwards could seem impossible."

Once, on being asked why he had become a writer, Greene replied, perhaps facetiously, that "there seemed nothing else to do. . . . It has become a habit and it's too late to change now." Certainly, the part about habit was true. He established early the work routine that he followed throughout his life: a letter to Vivien notes the "terrifying thought" that if he continued writing five hundred words a day for forty years, that would add up to seven million three hundred thousand words, "not allowing for leap years. Darling!! I *should* get a cramp!" His friend Michael Meyer observed him at work during a trip to Tahiti in 1959, when he was writing "A Burnt-Out Case":

> He wrote in longhand with a fine pen in a very small, almost illegible script, for two hours each day; no more, no less. In those two hours he would write seven to nine hundred words, the equivalent of two to three printed pages. . . . At 9 a.m. he would stop. This was when I got up, and as I walked along the verandah to the shower room he would look up and say, somewhat complacently I felt: "Nine hundred words this morning," or, even worse, "Finished my work for the day"—a depressing remark with which to be greeted when I hadn't yet begun and the thermometer was climbing towards ninety.



"I haven't actually whacked anyone in a while, but at this point I can get by purely on endorsements."

Greene's first two novels were rejected; the third, "The Man Within," appeared, in 1929, to positive reviews, but then two more failures nearly ended his career. His first commercial success came in 1932, with "Stamboul Train" (published in the United States as "Orient Express"), the story of eccentric passengers on a train from Ostend to Constantinople. In 1935, on an impulse, Greene travelled to Liberia, chiefly because "the most reliable map available still showed large blank areas with only the word 'Cannibals' written across." Here he conceived a hatred of imperialism that lasted the rest of his life. "Everything ugly was European," he wrote in "Journey Without Maps," his first travel book. "If there was anything beautiful in the place it was native." His next journey, in 1938, took him to southeastern Mexico to report on the persecution of Catholics by socialist revolutionaries. Travelling by boat, plane, and mule among the jungle towns of Chiapas and Tabasco, he heard harrowing stories of religious icons destroyed and priests executed or forced to marry, and these events became the material for "The Power and the Glory."

With this book, Greene developed the creative method that served him throughout his career. The novel's atmospherics, such as the descriptions of the seedy, rundown port town, derive directly from Greene's own experience, but the story itself, while based on contemporary events, is pure invention. The main character is a persecuted "whisky priest," who views himself as a sinner; years ago, he fathered a child with a parishioner. Although his actions endanger his own life and that of anyone he comes into contact with, he continues to travel from town to town offering to hear confessions and perform baptisms. After a dramatic flight to safety across the border, he allows himself to be lured back, and into a trap, by a sinister man identified only as "the mestizo." Greene works him into the story subtly, building the suggestion of his menace through almost imperceptible details:

> The mule came to a stop of its own accord beside a hammock. A man lay in it, bunched diagonally, with one leg trailing to keep the hammock moving, up and down, up and down, making a tiny current of air. The priest said, "Buenas tardes." The man opened his eyes and watched him. . . . He had only two

teeth left, canines which stuck yellowly out at either end of his mouth like the teeth you find enclosed in clay which have belonged to long-extinct animals.

Travelling in Mexico forty years later, Sherry was amazed to discover the mestizo himself, a former clerk called Don Pelito. The years had taken his yellow fangs, but he had the same mannerisms and "neighing laugh." Of course, Sherry writes, Don Pelito is not the mestizo: "What Greene did with one sighting of Don Pelito was to recognise the possibilities of developing a Judas." Anyone Greene ever met, no matter how incidental, was a potential "source."

During his travels, Greene discovered that he prospered, intellectually and creatively, under conditions of extremity; with the onset of the Second World War, extremity came to him at home. With Vivien and their two children evacuated from London, he thrived in the atmosphere of the wartime city. By now he had begun the first of his serious affairs—with a volunteer shelter warden and fire-watcher named Dorothy Glover, from whom he rented a writing studio in Bloomsbury. (Greene and his wife separated soon after the war but chose never to divorce.) During nighttime expeditions with Dorothy, he experienced firsthand the terror of the blitz, which forms the background for "The End of the Affair." Greene's own house was destroyed by a direct hit, but he had spent the night with Dorothy. "His life was saved because of his infidelity," Vivien later said.

Sherry is convinced that many of Greene's novels reflect with precision the facts of the novelist's life, and that characters act as nearly exact stand-ins for Greene or for people close to him. This is particularly true, Sherry believes, regarding Greene's affair with Catherine Walston, which lasted from 1947 into the early nineteen-sixties. (Sherry goes so far as to blame the end of their relationship for the decline in Greene's career.) The American wife of a wealthy landowner, Catherine was beautiful and high-spirited; Evelyn Waugh called her "unaffected to the verge of insanity." Despite periods of jealousy, her husband seems to have tolerated an open marriage. When Greene was not visiting their estate, Catherine joined him on trips throughout the world, most famously on Capri, where Greene bought a villa that became his favorite retreat.

As a practicing Catholic conducting an adulterous affair, Greene lived the tension that many of his novels dramatize, between religious strictures and human passion. Certain episodes seem to have been lifted wholesale from Greene and Catherine's romance. They apparently used "onions" as a code word for sex, as Bendrix and Sarah do in "The End of the Affair"; and Greene suggested to Sherry that parts of Sarah's journal may reflect Catherine's diary. Scobie, in "The Heart of the Matter," goes to confession knowing that he will be unable to promise to give up his lover, and hopes for a "miracle"—that the priest will "for once find the word, the right word" to absolve him. But the priest simply tells him that he must stop committing adultery: "He thought: how foolish it was of me to expect the magic word. This is the formula used so many times on so many people. Presumably people promised and went away and came back and confessed again." He thinks, "I am not going to cheat myself or God," and he says to the priest, "It would be no good my promising that, Father." These lines echo a passage in a letter from Greene to Catherine.

Despite Sherry's fixation on real-life details, it is the interplay of theology and fiction that gives the novels their drama. In "The End of the Affair," Sarah promises God that she will give Bendrix up if he survives a bombing raid, and then she must live with the torture of keeping her side of the bargain. Bendrix, who is the novel's narrator, imagines remonstrating with her:

> If this God exists and if even you—with your lusts and your adulteries and the timid lies you used to tell—can change like this, we could all be saints by leaping as you leapt, by shutting the eyes and leaping once and for all: if you are a saint, it's not so difficult to be a saint. It's something He can demand of any of us, leap.

Greene takes a distinctly forgiving attitude toward the Catholic idea of salvation after sin. Scobie becomes involved in an adulterous affair that sets off a domino effect: he is unable to confess, because he knows he cannot give up his lover; he takes Communion even though he has not confessed, since otherwise his wife will suspect him; and, finally, he succumbs to suicide, seeing no other way out. And yet the novel portrays him as a species of saint, as "The End of the Affair" does Sarah. Orwell, reviewing the book for this magazine in 1948, scoffed at Greene's "cult of the sanctified sinner": "When people really believed in Hell, they were not so fond of striking graceful attitudes on its brink." But this judgment misses the powerful psychological drama that drives Scobie's dilemma. Scobie loves God, but he loves Helen Rolt also, and the choice between them is not so simple as Orwell makes it out to be. Greene's novels cannot be reduced to their Catholic elements: the spiritual dilemma is always inseparable from the imagined life of the character.

Sarah's bargain with God is not unique in Greene's work. In "The Heart of the Matter," Scobie, witnessing the suffering of a sick child, prays, "Take away my peace forever, but give her peace." Greene's diary and his correspondence reveal similar bargains regarding matters both momentous and insignificant. After a pregnancy scare with one of his girlfriends, he reported to Catherine, "Secretly I made a promise that if there were no baby I would consider . . . going somewhere like Stonyhurst"—a Catholic retreat—"for three weeks or three months. There wasn't a baby and now I don't see how it's to be done." Critics have seized on such bargains as a sign of Greene's religious superficiality—"great balls theologically" was Evelyn Waugh's opinion. But this metaphysical Russian roulette seems another manifestation of Greene's profound ambivalence about God. Prayer is a one-way conversation, but a bargain, whether or not the desired result is obtained, implies the presence of someone on the other end.

Greene's travels can be seen as yet another game with fate. He had an unerring knack for turning up in countries at dangerous moments. In Saigon in the early nineteen-fifties, where he had his first experience with opium, he reported that "one lunches and dines behind iron grilles or wire netting to keep out the grenades." Many of his observations found their way into "The Quiet American," the story of an earnest young C.I.A. agent whose ignorance results in tragedy. The book brought accusations that Greene was anti-American, and he did little to deflect them. In Cuba in the late nineteen-fifties, he declared his support for Fidel Castro's impending revolution. (He displayed art work that Castro had given him in his flat in Antibes.) Nearly ten years later, he got in trouble for stating, in a letter to the London *Times*, that, given the choice between living in the Soviet Union and living in the United States, he would choose the Soviet Union. Sherry, full of theories when it comes to Greene's love life, has little insight into his politics. "How could this brilliant mind be so easily taken in?" he laments of Greene's friendship with Castro. Yet he is surely right to say that Greene was not anti-American but "anti-anyone, any time, any way, any how, whenever he feels that justice is not being served."

One's sense of Greene's political independence of mind is muddied by the revelation that on many of these trips he was likely doing freelance work for MI6. His involvement with espionage began during the Second World War, when he spent a year as an agent in Sierra Leone, and then worked at S.I.S. headquarters in London under the notorious Soviet agent Kim Philby. Greene remained affectionate toward Philby, despite drawing public scorn for his support of a traitor. He wrote an admiring foreword to Philby's memoir, and visited him in the Soviet Union. But Sherry is not the first to suggest that he was staying on Philby's good side only in order to pass his friend's letters on to MI6. Even while researching "Our Man in Havana," his comic novel about a vacuum-cleaner salesman turned secret agent who fools his handlers by fabulizing informers, Greene may have been in the employ of MI6. Sherry wonders whether Greene cooked up the novel as a cover for his own spying, suggesting that "if he made fun of British Intelligence, Cuba wouldn't take it, or him, seriously." But if Greene really did continue to spy throughout his life it is impossible to separate what he truly believed from anything he may have said for the benefit of his employers.

By the late nineteen-sixties, Greene's trajectory had begun its long descent. His affair with Catherine Walston had come to a painful end—partly because she refused to leave her husband, partly because of his own multiple infidelities. (In the appendices to Volume III there is a document titled "Graham's List of Favourite Prostitutes.") On a trip to Africa in 1959, he met Yvonne Cloetta, the wife of a French businessman in Cameroon, who remained his companion for the last thirty-one years of his life. After getting embroiled in tax difficulties in Britain, he settled permanently in Antibes, where he kept a flat around the corner from Cloetta's. Starting with "A Burnt-Out Case," which appeared in 1960, he proclaimed each novel to be his last, but he went on publishing at his usual clip until the final years of his life. In "Greene on Capri," a memoir of a thirty-year friendship with Greene, Shirley Hazzard offers this measured assessment of his later work: "The inspired pain of the earlier fiction would not recur; or even the intensity of those lighter and livelier works that Graham had once differentiated as 'entertainments.' What remained was professionalism: a unique view and tone, a practised, topical narrative that held the interest and forced the pace of the reader. Poignancy was largely subsumed into world-weariness, resurfacing in spasms of authenticity."

Greene liked to preface his novels with disclaimers. "No character in this book is based on that of a living person," he declared at the start of "The Heart of the Matter." Dedicating "A Burnt-Out Case" to a doctor he visited in the Congo, he notes, "Dr Colin's leproserie is not your leproserie. . . . It would be a waste of time for anyone to try to identify Querry, the Ryckers, Parkinson, Father Thomas—they are formed from the flotsam of thirty years as a novelist." After reading "A Burnt-Out Case," Evelyn Waugh wrote to Greene, "I know . . . how mischievous it is to identify fictional characters with their authors, but . . . this novel makes it plain that you are exasperated by the reputation which has come to you unsought as a 'Catholic' writer." Greene's response is typically cagey:

> With a writer of your genius and insight I certainly would not attempt to hide behind the time-old gag that an author can never be identified with his characters. Of course in some of Querry's reactions there are reactions of mine, just as in some of Fowler's reactions in "The Quiet American" there are reactions of mine. . . . A parallel must not be drawn all down the line and not necessarily to the conclusion of the line. . . . I wanted to give expression to various states or moods of belief and unbelief.

If Greene truly believed that his work took place in "a region of the mind," why did he hold Norman Sherry to his time-consuming, tedious, dangerous promise to follow in his tracks? Why did he take such offense when his critics invoked "Greeneland" as shorthand for his fictional universe? Perhaps it was because, caveats aside, he believed that his obligation as a novelist was to represent people as he encountered them and understood them. Indeed, this sense of obligation extended to God, an integral, though ambiguous, element in his world. As he once explained to a journalist, "I have often tried in my work to show the mercy of God. You cannot show it by portraying only virtuous people; what good is mercy to the virtuous? It is in the drunken priests that you can see mercy working. And I call that optimism. But they call it Greeneland, as though it bore no relation to the real world. And yet, one is simply trying to describe the real world as accurately as one sees it."

In 1991, dying of leukemia in Switzerland, Greene expressed the wish that he might "be remembered, perhaps, from time to time—in the way that one recalls Flaubert." The remark puzzled those around him, but the comparison is illuminating. Greene practiced in his novels a peculiar form of realism: not a realism of the everyday but a vision of the psychological, political, and spiritual difficulties that people face in moments of extremity. He once quoted a line of Browning as a suitable epigraph for all his novels: "Our interest's on the dangerous edge of things. / The honest thief, the tender murderer, / The superstitious atheist."

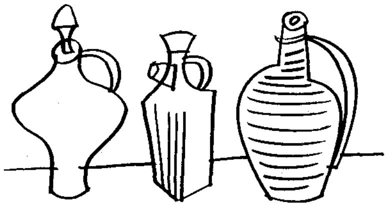
Greene's fundamental difficulty as a Christian was that he doubted his own ability to love God—to make the leap of faith, the unconditional surrender, that transforms a sinner into a saint. But his failings as a Christian were his virtues as a novelist, because the novelist's dedication is to humanity, not divinity. If man truly is made in God's image, then the distance between the two poles may not be as great as Greene thought. "Some of us have a vocation to love God," he once prayed. "Some of us only have a vocation to love a human being. Please let my vocation not be wasted." It was not. ♦

BRIEFLY NOTED

Far and Wide

Maximum City, *by Suketu Mehta (Knopf; $27.95).* Modern Bombay is home to fourteen million people, two-thirds of them packed into neighborhoods where the population density reaches one million per square mile. Its official name is now Mumbai, but, as the author points out, the city has always had "multiple aliases, as do gangsters and whores." Mehta, who lived there as a child, has a penchant for the city's most "morally compromised" inhabitants: the young Hindu mafiosi who calmly recollect burning Muslims alive during riots twelve years ago; the crooked policeman who stages "encounter killings" of hoods whose usefulness has expired; the bar girl, adorned with garlands of rupees, whose arms are scarred from suicide attempts. Mehta's brutal portrait of urban life derives its power from intimacy with his subjects. After clandestine meetings with some of Bombay's most wanted assassins, he notes, "I know their real names, what they like to eat, how they love, what their precise relationship is with God."

The Dark Heart of Italy, *by Tobias Jones (North Point; $24).* In 1999, Jones moved to Italy, and he explores his adoptive country with a loving, sometimes cynical, always questioning eye. He points out that the word *storia* means both "history" and "story," and that the distinction is not always clear. Themes and subjects recur in his quest for understanding: soccer, language, and, above all, the grandiose figure of the prime minister, Silvio Berlusconi. He is attuned to the perspective of the ordinary citizens he meets in bars and post-office lines, but he also gets behind the surface, providing neat background summaries of such phenomena as the "clean hands" investigations of the nineties, the Vatican finance scandals of the seventies, and why Italian TV is as bad as it is. While he finds Italy "infuriating and endlessly irritating," he can't imagine leaving, because "life seems less exciting outside Italy."



West of Then, *by Tara Bray Smith (Simon & Schuster; $24).* When Smith was a child in Honolulu, her drug-prone mother, Karen, would vanish for hours at a time; when Smith was thirty-two, Karen, now homeless and a hopeless addict, went missing for several months. In this memoir, Smith combs the parks, rehab clinics, and red-light district of Honolulu for her mother, examining not only Karen's descent into prostitution and heroin but also her family's genteel past on Hawaii's sugarcane plantations. Her sense of place and of history amplifies the narrative, though at times she relies too heavily on the well-worn trope of corrupted paradise. She has a sharp descriptive eye—a housing subdivision consists of "concrete-block ranch houses xeroxed onto freshly paved streets"—and a strong voice, which, though it occasionally shades into portentousness, honestly plumbs the guilt, rage, love, and pity that she feels toward her mother.

Molvanîa, *by Santo Cilauro, Tom Gleisner, and Rob Sitch (Overlook; $13.95).* The Republic of Molvanîa, known as the birthplace of whooping cough and the Molvanîan Sneezing Hound, has been largely ignored by the backpacking set in its sweep through post-Communist Europe. This may have something to do with the country's miserable landscape, miserable weather, miserable food, and miserable, surly populace; on the other hand, it may have something to do with the fact that Molvanîa doesn't exist. In format and page layout, this inspired send-up of a travel guide looks exactly like the real thing, and it displays an acute feel for all the clichés of the genre, including testimonials that instruct how to have an uncomfortable "authentic" experience, rather than a "bland, westernized" one. The nation's new national anthem is set to the tune of "What a Feeling," from the movie "Flashdance"; useful phrases include the Molvanîan for "Please," "Thank you," "May God send you a sturdy donkey," and "What is that smell?"

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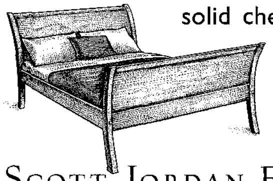

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POP MUSIC

FOUR SINGLES

Faith, war, and commerce.

BY SASHA FRERE-JONES

Beyoncé Knowles is a poet of hugeness. It is the subject of her work and the signal feature of her life. She is the lead singer of one of the world's hugest pop groups, Destiny's Child, and she has a multimillion-dollar contract with L'Oréal, which is about as big as lipstick gets. Her boyfriend is the rapper Jay-Z, who in any other relationship would be the famous one. And in her increasingly remarkable records Beyoncé is creating a new kind of supersized music, a triumphalist pop that makes its point through magnitude as much as style. Last year, shorn of her surname—an act of enlargement in itself—she released an album of her own called "Dangerously in Love," which followed the brilliant single "Crazy in Love" to considerable sales and a Grammy award. "Crazy in Love," written and produced by Rich Harrison, was built around a horn sample from the 1970 Chi-Lites soul tune "Are You My Woman? (Tell Me So)" and a delightful beat full of bells and syncopation. It was like "Gladiator" crossed with a block party, monomaniacal in a cheerfully inclusive way. Now reunited with Rodney (Darkchild) Jerkins, her longtime producer, for the new Destiny's Child single, "Lose My Breath," Beyoncé introduces a vaguely military anxiety. The song opens with nothing but drums. They are recognizable, obviously not born in a machine, and anyone who's ever watched a parade or a football game will know the sound: it's a marching band playing the peacetime drums of war, accompanied by cheerleaders clapping very, very quickly. A lot seems to be riding on this particular game. Two synthesizer chords flash on either side of the rhythm while Destiny's Child approaches romance like boot camp: "Bring the noise, make me lose my breath / Hit me hard, make me lose my (hah hah) / Can you keep up? . . . I'm startin' to believe that I'm way too much for you / All that talk but it seems like it can't come through." A sweet, sinuous thump runs under the clangor, but messages to the hips will not necessarily make it through. This song is shouting, arms upraised, and it's coming straight at you. Or someone.

Destiny's Child's "Lose My Breath" hints at a vaguely military anxiety.

ISTVAN BANYAI

In February, Kanye West, best known for the last few years as a hip-hop producer, reintroduced himself as a performer on an album called "The College Dropout," which has generated four Top 20 songs. (This unexpected success recalls Dr. Dre's "The Chronic," from 1992, an album from a producer turned artist which few predicted would become as popular and influential as it did.) West's biggest hit this year was the No. 1 "Slow Jamz," a collaboration with the comedian Jamie Foxx and the rapper Twista. It's funny—a novelty song about seducing women with old soul records. After hearing it, the last thing you'd expect from West is an explicitly devotional song about Christianity. But that's exactly what "Jesus Walks" is. It, too, evokes the military, and the war starts before the music. A drill sergeant barks, "Ready, huh!" and West begins talking: "We at war. We at war with terrorism, racism, but most of all we at war with ourselves." A slow, martial beat plays as soldiers hut-one-two and a gospel choir laments wordlessly. It sounds simultaneously like V-Day and like a funeral, which may be the logical outcome of news saturation. Or maybe it's just the sound of confusion—West's default position on "The College Dropout" is to mock and crack wise, and this makes him an uneasy pastor. When the choir sings, "Jesus walks," West responds with "God, show me the way, because the Devil is trying to break me down." As the track builds, folding in live strings and vocal solos, West prays in a singular way: "I ain't here to argue about his facial features / Or here to convert atheists into believers / I'm just trying to say the way school need teachers / The way Kathie Lee needed Regis, that's the way I need Jesus." For West, faith is a complex and forgiving process. It's O.K. to brag, to apologize, to insult, and to complain. If there are any commandments that West follows, it's not apparent what they are. In a remix of "Jesus Walks" featuring the rapper Mase—now a reverend as well—West describes "jewelry" as one of the Devil's lures, though he is currently developing a retail line of gold-and-diamond Jesus pendants. In a different year, "Jesus Walks" might register as an eccentric's conflation of faith, commerce, and war. In 2004, it's a popular state of consciousness.

When Burger King thinks its money is getting lonely, it bundles "Spider-Man 2" toys into a kids' meal. Pop is no different. The biggest man right now in R. & B.—and all pop—is Usher, and R. & B.'s biggest female seller this year is Alicia Keys. Those pressed for time can listen to Usher's new single "My Boo," which conveniently features Alicia Keys. Sadly, "My Boo" isn't the supercool glow-in-the-dark wand at the bottom of the bag but the baffling slingshot/calculator that never actually works. "My Boo" won't get by on lyrics like "There's always that one person that will always have your heart / You never see it coming, 'cause you're blinded from the start." Only a strong delivery will save this ode to everlasting love. Usher does his part by being cautious, taking his feathery voice exactly as far as it will go and no further. This approach is infinitely preferable to Keys's self-serious karaoke. Keys is a lithe beauty who has been widely congratulated for playing the piano, but she has a tendency to ape singers beyond her powers. On "My Boo," her singing is a weak imitation of Mary J. Blige, with little flashes of Motown coloration. A momentary attempt to rap doesn't lessen the failure. Here, Jermaine Dupri's production makes "My Boo" more diverting than the songs that Keys releases under her own name, which she has been widely congratulated for having written. Like her singing, her compositions are full of homey clichés and sincere tributes to the gravitas of seventies soul, all of which has convinced a lot of people that Keys is already part of the tradition that she rightly reveres. Not yet, she isn't.

Even though Alan Jackson and Tim McGraw had the No. 1 and the No. 2 best-selling albums in the nation last week, New York City has no commercial country station, and if you're looking for country records in the Times Square Virgin Megastore you have to go two floors down, to an unpeopled corner far from the front door. Is this because country is known as the music of the Republican Party? If we grapple regularly with the work of misogynist hip-hop geniuses and muddle-headed rock visionaries, why can't we appreciate the work of people who vote for the other guy? Gretchen Wilson's début album, "Here for the Party," provides a perfect example of Nashville's charms. Its first two singles, "Redneck Woman" and "Here for the Party," share the same vaguely Presidential message: Whatever you look down on, I claim as a virtue that bonds me with the people. "Redneck Woman" wasted no words: "I'm a redneck woman, I ain't no high-class broad/I'm just a product of my raising, I say hey y'all and yee-haw." Having established her take on class and status, Wilson makes the point again in a less defensive way on "Here for the Party" 's title track: "Well, I'm an eight-ball-shooting, double-fisted drinking son of a gun / I wear my jeans a little tight / Just to watch the little boys come undone." Not only is she proud of her background, she's convinced that she's having more fun than we are, and, after a verse or two, so are we. This is the kind of thing Nashville does better than anyone this side of Missy Elliott: write a clever, efficient song, get a bunch of highly paid ninjas to play the heck out of it, and assign it to someone who can actually sing. In the current fashion cycle, Wilson's backstory is her brand, but she is still working within the Nashville formula. What is not formulaic is her voice. She has superb control, and there seems to be an awful lot to control. "Here for the Party" has an easy, conversational melody, and she rides it hard, as if she's been singing for hours and we're just coming in. The police sirens that end the song can't drown out her defiant taunt: "Just try to throw me out!" Problem is, there are still too many places that country music can't get into to get thrown out of. ♦

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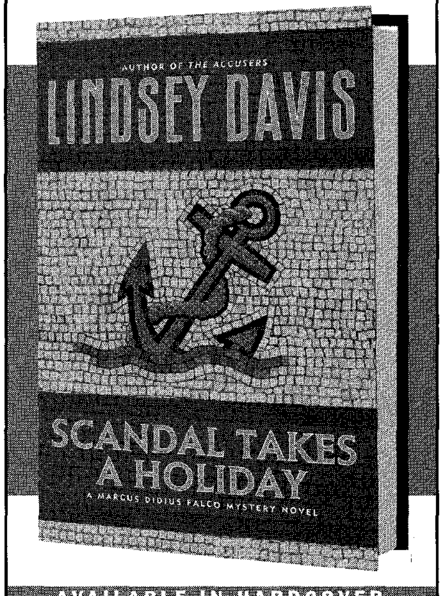

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This time, CBS really broke the news.

BY NANCY FRANKLIN

A discussion about the value, relevance, and long-term viability of network news shows has been going on for a while, and naturally it accelerated in the past couple of weeks, after CBS's unsinkable "60 Minutes" plowed into an iceberg. The sorry episode, in which the authenticity of documents used to buttress a story about the President's National Guard service three decades ago was called into question, enjoyed only a brief life as a flap—when it looked as though CBS had the goods to back its story and the attacks were anti-big-media gun spray from the trigger-happy right—before becoming a scandal when, last week, it came to light that CBS could not authenticate the documents after all. When Tom Brokaw announced, in 2002, that he would retire after this year's Presidential election, the Internet heated up on the subject "Whither the network news?" With cable news rocking around the clock, and with the Internet providing instant news—or corrections of the news—often faster than even cable could broadcast it, was there a place anymore for a late-in-the-day, twenty-two-minute news show? This time, the Internet—blogs in particular, many of which are part-time enterprises, written and compiled by guys sitting at home waiting to pounce on the mainstream (excuse me, *élite*) media—played a more important and more active role in the story, by immediately questioning the validity of the memos that Dan Rather, the correspondent of the "60 Minutes" piece, used to support the well-established claim that Bush received preferential treatment during his now-you-see-him, now-you-don't service in the Texas Air National Guard.

CBS, in its rush to air the story, which was reported in large part by the producer, Mary Mapes, and overseen by Andrew Heyward, the head of the CBS News division, failed in its basic journalistic duties, and then took its time apologizing. Shortly after the "60 Minutes" broadcast, when conservative bloggers went into "C.S.I." mode and raised doubts about the memos, CBS and Rather dug in their heels, even as the ground was crumbling under them, and put out a bizarrely defensive statement saying, "Contrary to some rumors, no internal investigation is underway at CBS News nor is one planned." By then, the questions about those at CBS who were responsible for the broadcast—what didn't they know, and when didn't they know it?—called for full and honest answers. To twist one of Rather's favorite Texasisms, that dog should have hunted. Finally, twelve days after the story aired, CBS and Rather apologized for not having sufficiently investigated the provenance of the documents. The next day, it was reported that Mapes had put in a call to Joe Lockhart, a Kerry campaign adviser (and a former press secretary of President Clinton's), asking him to call Bill Burkett, a retired Texas National Guard lieutenant colonel and Democratic activist who had provided the documents in the first place, and who wanted to get in touch with the campaign. *Ouch.*

At this point, the discussion of the episode became less a referendum on the viability of network news and more a dissection of CBS News specifically and of the chain of approval for its stories. CBS News and Rather are often accused of "liberal bias" (there is, of course, a Web site, ratherbiased.com, devoted to Rather's sins), and Mapes's gigantic errors in judgment—and, more seriously, those of Heyward—won't help the network's case. Needless to say, CBS also took a spanking at the hands of the late-night talk shows, including one of its own: David Letterman ran a fake intro to the CBS Evening News, with an announcer saying, "Tonight on the CBS Evening News, we report nine real stories and one fake one. Can you guess which is which?"

Still, Rather's mistake probably had

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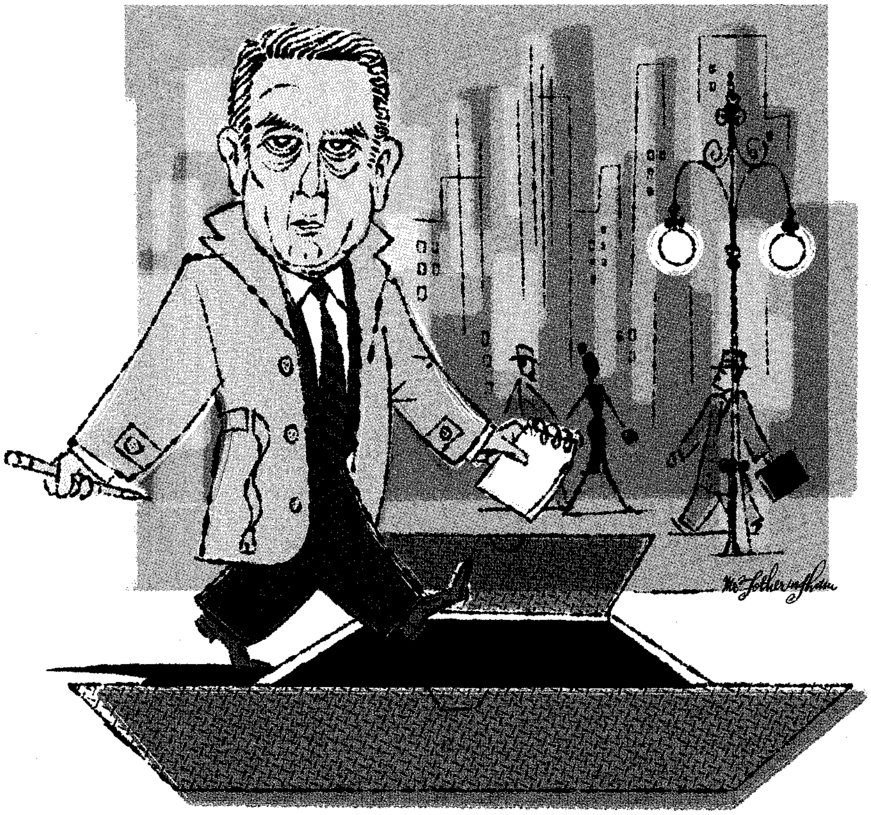
TURNING LEAF

more to do with competitiveness and scoopaholism than with any political bias. That's the way people in the news business are made. One of Rather's famous bits of behavior involved his walking away from the anchor's chair, in 1987, to protest the intrusion of a U.S. Open tennis match into the evening-news slot, a huff that resulted in six minutes of blackness going out over the airwaves. Rather wanted the network, if it was going to stick with the tennis, to start the news at seven, at the beginning of the next half-hour interval; but when the match ended only two minutes after six-thirty, efforts had to be made to find Rather and get him back in his seat. In an interview for Ken Auletta's book "Three Blind Mice: How the TV Networks Lost Their Way," Howard Stringer, who was the president of CBS News at the time of Rather's walkout, said that "the difference between a reporter and an anchor is like the difference between a D.A. and a judge," and that this was an instance of Rather, whom he called "an outstanding, aggressive reporter," being the D.A. (It could also be viewed as a case of Rather acting as though he himself were the law.) Rather was defending the primacy of the news, with the intensity and the hardheadedness that he has become known for.



An unwelcome fifteen minutes of fame for Dan Rather and "60 Minutes."

EDWIN FOTHERINGHAM

Aggressiveness and determination are necessary attributes in reporters, obviously, and any high-profile figure in network news needs them in double supply, partly so that he can do his job and partly so that he can be seen to be doing his job by his bosses—careful, unshowy reporting may earn plaudits from other journalists, but it is invisible to both the networks themselves, which are primarily concerned with the business of entertainment, and the corporations that own the networks (ditto). Memorable evidence of this was provided in 2002 by Disney-owned ABC, when it pulled the Mickey Mouse move of trying to replace Ted Koppel's "Nightline" with Letterman. The networks have a laserlike focus on the bottom line, and the money that they spend on their news divisions has decreased over the years, as have the ratings for all three network newscasts; they still have more viewers by far than the cable news shows, but those numbers are going down, and CBS has been in third place for about a decade. Although the Iraq war, global terrorism, and the Presidential campaign have juiced those who work in network news, it isn't a rewarding time to be an anchor. (Except financially, that is—all three anchors are doing quite well, thank you.) Rather, Brokaw, and Peter Jennings are tops in their field; they go to the best parties and know everybody who's anybody; and they know a lot about the world. Still, they have to wake up every day and prove that they are not—to use the word that invariably crops up when the traditional network-news format is batted around—dinosaurs. Polls and ratings figures show that young people are not developing the warm, fuzzy feelings toward anchors that their elders supposedly have, and the networks have no idea whether what loyalty does exist will carry into the coming years once all three of the current anchors are gone. At the moment, CBS needs Rather. He is the face of the network, and if his face were suddenly to be absent—if his face were fired, that is—the CBS eye would look like a black hole, and you'd hear the wind whistling through the void. And then you'd turn the channel.

The networks have been active agents of their own diminishment: all of them cut foreign coverage way back in the decade or so before September 11, 2001, and this year, with the country at war and with the first Presidential campaign following a historic and disputed Presidential election, they chose to carry only one hour of the Democratic and Republican Conventions each night. Even if the network news shows still see themselves as a kind of public trust, the public is increasingly looking elsewhere for a credible and ordered reflection of the world; the authority that used to belong to the networks is now scattered across the multimedia universe. Rather was enlisted to appear on Letterman's first show after September 11th, as a reassuring presence, but it was Letterman's soulful monologue that provided sense and solace that night. (A transcript of the monologue is available on—where else?—a blog.) We've all become empowered by the choices at our fingertips, but we—bloggers, TV viewers—don't necessarily have the skill and depth of experience that news organizations draw upon. Speed isn't everything—as Rather himself painfully found out. But the fact that a respected newsman has proved to be a flawed captain of his ship doesn't mean that anyone else would be any better at steering the thing. ♦

THE CURRENT CINEMA

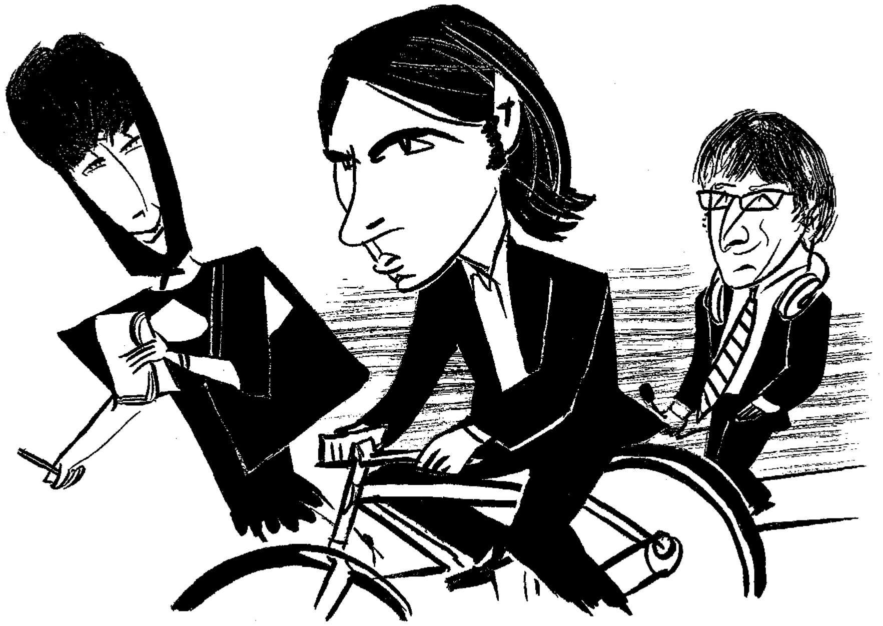
BATTLE STATES

"I ♥ Huckabees," "Silver City."

BY DAVID DENBY

Movie disasters (not to be confused with disaster movies) come in many styles. There are the leaden, twelve-footed monsters ("Pearl Harbor," "King Arthur"), the relentless whirligigs ("Men in Black II," the remake of "Planet of the Apes"), the attempts to wash the audience's brains out with pedagogic soap (the collected work of Lars von Trier). And then there's the special case of the film that goes so far into obsession that moviegoers are left staring at the screen in veneration or disbelief. David O. Russell's "I ♥ Huckabees" is definitely one of the latter. It's a comedy of the manic school, in which the characters, skittering along the edges of the frame, speak only about Big Ideas, say everything four times, quarrel at the drop of a non sequitur, and have sex in uncomfortable places. There are diatribes, freak-outs, instant revelations, and much talk about "your perception of reality." In the sixties, "Huckabees" might have arrived on the wings of hash, but Russell, in his jabbering, everything-going-on-at-once way, is not searching for the ineffable. Nor is he trying to be hip. He seems, on the contrary, to be searching for answers. He throws in visual divertissements in which people's eyes leave their faces and float in the air—digital surrealism by way of Man Ray and Manfred Kriegelstein—but, in the end, he wants to put those faces back together. Russell and the screenwriter Jeff Baena garble their philosophical themes, goosing them for comic effect, yet in some daft way the movie is serious, which may be the most curious thing about it. "Huckabees" is the real thing—an authentic disaster—but the picture is so odd that it should inspire, in at least a part of the audience, feelings of fervent loyalty.

Russell, the talented satirist who directed "Spanking the Monkey," "Flirting with Disaster," and "Three Kings," has made a farce about metaphysics and blue funk. His hero is one Albert Markovski (Jason Schwartzman), a surly little hysteric who curses out loud because he doesn't know the meaning of life. Albert is a nagging do-gooder. He's the head of a group that tries to preserve green open spaces in America's endless suburban sprawl. (The movie was shot—generically, as it were—in Los Angeles.) Albert makes a deal with Brad Stand (Jude Law), a rising young executive at Huckabees, a superstore chain, in which Albert's group will lay off the company if it agrees to save some woods at the site of a new store. But Albert feels lost, and he hires two "existential detectives" (Dustin Hoffman and Lily Tomlin) to spy on every aspect of his life in order to find out what's wrong with him. Hoffman, with the long hair of an L.A. wizard-quack, and Tomlin, severe and rather elegant in low-cut dresses, might have been a classic nutbrain intellectual couple if only Russell hadn't directed them to talk over and through each other. As if the jammed chatter weren't puzzling enough, we get even more confused when we realize that their ideas aren't "existential" at all but something Eastern-sounding. Everything is connected, they tell Albert; the center is everywhere. The true existentialist in the movie is the couple's renegade French disciple, Caterine Vauban (Isabelle Huppert), a sexy *philosophe* in a limo who believes that we're all alone, that life, as it says on her business card, is "cruelty, manipulation, meaninglessness." She makes love with Albert on a log, and everybody fights for his soul. There's more, much more—sendups of mangy environmental types, religious communities, and corporate bonhomie—but I couldn't possibly summarize it even if I wanted to. "I ♥ Huckabees" is Hurricane David O., and there's nothing to do but enjoy the flashes of lightning and wait for the rest of it to blow over.



Lily Tomlin, Jason Schwartzman, and Dustin Hoffman in David O. Russell's movie.

TOM BACHTELL

It's possible, of course, for a filmmaker to embrace both of the movie's philosophical views—to believe, at the same time, that everything is connected and everything is separate. Albert Markovski may need to choose, but Russell does not. The director has chaotic group scenes in which everyone is certainly part of everyone else—they glom onto one another, as if with sticky fingers—and he has better moments, when the comedy slows down a bit and he glories in individual quirks. Mark Wahlberg is rather touching as a violently sincere, not very bright firefighter with nothing on his mind but energy conservation—he rides a bicycle, rather than a fuel-burning truck, to a fire. Naomi Watts, always ready for something new, plays the "voice of Huckabees," a swivel-hipped ditz who appears in the company's commercials but decides to reject its notion of beauty. (Her rebellion takes the form of showing up at work with a dirty face, wearing overalls and a Dutch-girl bonnet.) Jude Law, as a handsome corporate jerk, performs with a euphoric grin that he's never shown before. Anything can happen in a pinwheeling movie like this; it doesn't follow any logic, not even its own. Russell, it seems, has arrived at a strange place. He's not as interested as he used to be in satirizing the way we live now; he's become too impatient, too exasperated. In some of the tirades about the environment or energy abuse, one hears a profound liberal melancholy—Albert may discover himself, but the battle has been lost, and all the good people are going crazy.

The same feeling of despair comes pouring out of John Sayles's new movie. "Silver City" is about the corruption of Colorado by a powerful local family, the Pilagers, whose scapegrace son, Richard Pilager—known among his former frat buddies as Dim Dickie—is running for governor. Dickie faces the press now and then and speaks as follows:

> In the case of capital offenses, I am absolutely in favor of the death penalty. You hear stories about frontier justice. You can bet that the wrongdoers—the folks who couldn't play by the rules—they had some respect for that. And there was no ah . . . ah . . . taxpayers didn't pay any—if they had had taxpayers back then—those were the good old days, I suppose. All you needed was a good strong rope and a tree to hang it from.

The deep-water thrashing about, the lunging at little verbal buoys, the instinctive reactionary homily—Dickie is George W. Bush all over. There's a double act of mimicry going on here. Sayles wrote this spasmodic gibberish, and Chris Cooper renders it with inspired timing and negative panache—a mixture of grim panic and sudden conviction.

As Dickie holds forth, Sayles throws in reaction shots of the assembled reporters, who are so stunned by Dickie's ineptitudes that they fail to interrogate him as vigorously as they should. Dickie, we gather, will win the election. "Silver City" suggests that populist-style simplicities, propped up by money, favoritism, and evangelical certitude, have more than a good chance of succeeding in this country. At the moment, this cannot be called paranoid exaggeration. The movie is part satirical riff, part mournful film noir—an open-air, Colorado-style noir, in which the hero, Danny O'Brien (Danny Huston), a shambling ex-investigative reporter who has fallen to the level of doing dirty work for the Pilagers, stumbles through misadventures all over the state and reclaims his soul. Hired to intimidate the Pilagers' enemies, Danny inadvertently, then intentionally, discovers evidence of the family's complicity in polluted lakes, immigrant-labor trafficking, and the gutting of regulatory restraints on behalf of real-estate developers. The Pilagers and their cronies have run roughshod over Colorado's landscape, all in the name of "liberty" and "the people."

As always, Sayles takes his time, meanders, never quite works up a full head of steam. His camera, gliding around political-strategy rooms and construction sites, is more mobile than it used to be, but he has little interest in confrontation or violence. He not only disdains melodrama; he disdains drama. The plot of "Silver City" is movieish in the extreme, with filthy abandoned mines subbing for the bars and alleys of urban noir, but it's no more than mild cheese—"The Big Sleep" or "Chinatown" without the malice, rigorous design, and narrative epiphanies. As Danny goes about his errands, he runs into a full crew of ranters, malcontents, and solipsists: an enraged right-wing radio talk-show host (Miguel Ferrer), a self-destructive Pilager heiress (Daryl Hannah), a radical journalist planting seeds of doubt about the establishment on his Web site (Tim Roth). Sayles has a particular sympathy for these losers chewed up by the rampaging political élite. Rumpled Danny Huston (the son of John Huston), with a brooding sullenness that breaks into an enchanting smile, plays the chief loser. At first glance, Huston seems to lack the concentration of a trained actor; he seems a little preoccupied, slow to react. But he has some of his father's courtly intonations and irony, and he has a deep-down charm. The Colorado movers—politicians, developers, lobbyists—regard Danny with amused condescension, but Huston, in his sheepish way, makes him the moral center of the movie. And yet there's no pretense that Danny's efforts could possibly forestall the upcoming reign of Dim Dickie. In Sayles's movie as well as in Russell's, an element of liberal self-pity breaks the surface. We've got the ideals, but they've got the power and the money, and they know how to win—that's the prevailing mood. If Bush is reëlected, and future historians need to look for signs of virtuous defeatism in advance of the victory, these movies will be the right place to start. ♦

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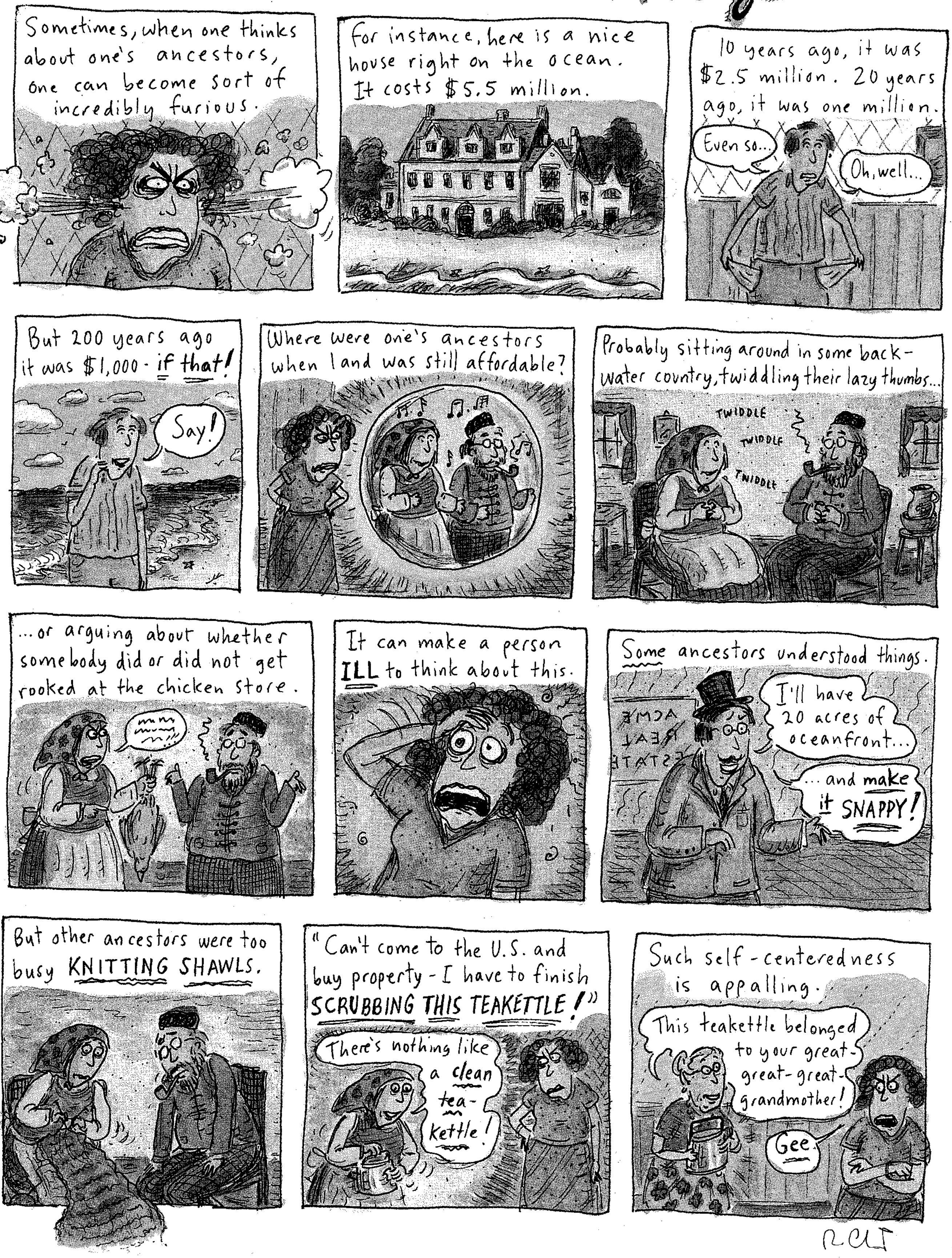
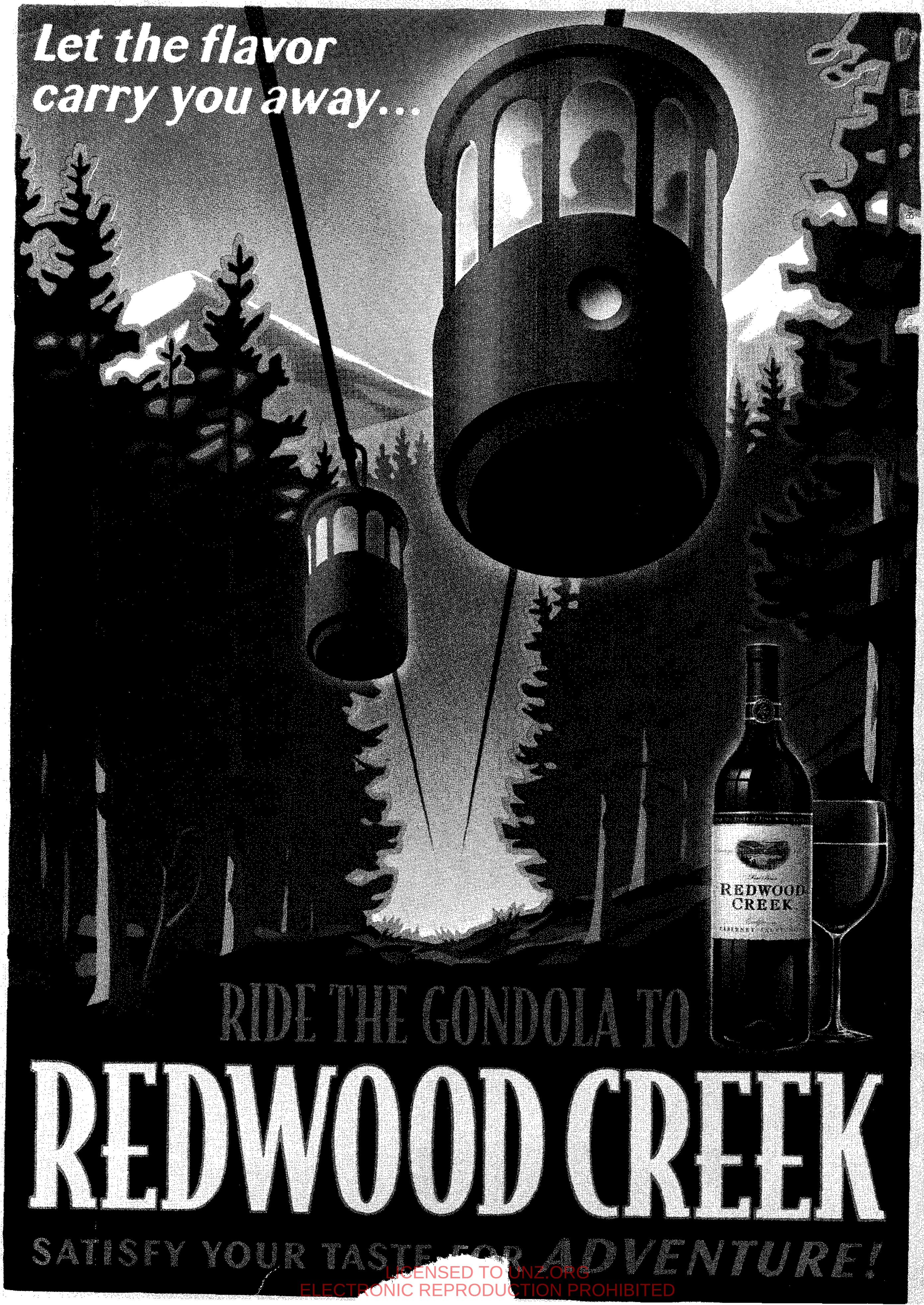

Sometimes, when one thinks about one's ancestors, one can become sort of incredibly furious.
For instance, here is a nice house right on the ocean. It costs $5.5 million.
10 years ago, it was $2.5 million. 20 years ago, it was one million.
Even so...
Oh, well...
But 200 years ago it was $1,000 - if that!
Say!
Where were one's ancestors when land was still affordable?
Probably sitting around in some back-water country, twiddling their lazy thumbs...
TWIDDLE
TWIDDLE
TWIDDLE
...or arguing about whether somebody did or did not get rooked at the chicken store.
It can make a person ILL to think about this.
Some ancestors understood things.
ACME REAL ESTATE
I'll have 20 acres of oceanfront...
...and make it SNAPPY!
But other ancestors were too busy KNITTING SHAWLS.
"Can't come to the U.S. and buy property - I have to finish SCRUBBING THIS TEAKETTLE!"
There's nothing like a clean tea-kettle!
Such self-centeredness is appalling.
This teakettle belonged to your great-great-great-grandmother!
Gee.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